Happy Days
at
Little Oak Ranch
(Vaca Valley)

Boyhood Memories and
notes of later days –
the plain, the hills, the
trees, birds and flowers.

by
W. L. Jepson

Vol. 1.

If lost finder please return
to W. L. Jepson, 11 Mosswood Road,
Berkeley, California, and receive
reward.

F. B. = Jepson Field Book, volume and page as indicated.

"Pleasant old stories and tales of former times".—
Francois Rabelais, Works, 1:217

The Brick Yard

Near the railroad bridge across the Ulatis on the north side of the creek a brick kiln was built in the days when I first started to the grammar school at Vacaville. It was the first time I had ever seen such a thing – doubtless it was the first mass manufacturing I ever saw. A horse turned the winch which sent the soft clayed mud out into wooden forms holding perhaps six bricks. A man picked up one of these and carried it out to a cleaned piece of earth, inverted the form and left the soft bricks to dry in the sun. After which they were piled up into a great kiln with great furnace holes at bottom to receive the wood used as fuel, the whole structure plastered over with mud to keep in the heat, and the firing began. That part was wonderful, the great glowing furnaces shining with an intense red glare — kept up night and day with a man stoking, for say about seven days. And then what a marvelous sight when the job was done and the outer layer torn off revealing the deep red bricks, the product of the intense heat.

Truthfulness of Children.

Perhaps more than any other virtue truth was inculcated upon his children. We might commit this or that fault but story-telling was the capital sin. As a result we sometimes embarrassed our parents. There were three families of Davis

in the neighborhood. We called them by names which were diagnostic, namely Rich Davis, Poor Davis and Widow Davis. These designations were accurately descriptive — no one could mistake what we meant. But we casually used this nomenclature* one day before company which annoyed our parents very much, especially our father. — Feb. 21, 1931. See below.

— Camp meeting on Putah Creek; see Men and Manners, 5:3.

— The home horses racing on the plain before the first fall storm. cf. Men and Manners, 5:3.

— The real names, see above, were "Bill" Davis, Milt Davis, and the other I do not recall.

— Cato, Farm Management. McMillan. 1913
↑Roman

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* The news were always told and the news were news of the road. We had met "Poor Davis" on the road.

Fire

After the first of May the country dried brown, then yellow, then white. Everything became intensely dry under the continuous rays of the sun. Grass crackled under boot, twigs broke, boards split on slight provocation. In the open fire was thus a menace of the first magnitude. Every workman, every farm laborer was cautioned, was questioned as to whether he smoked or not. The danger was particularly great in days of north wind with its low humidity.

And then finally came fire on semi-quiet but soon stirring a wind in its wake, running rapidly over the grain fields and eating up the great stacks waiting

for the thresher, forming huge billows of black smoke, spreading in a great ominous arc that cut the sky from north to south, spreading everywhere a sense of terror, horror, despair. Blazing shoots of flames parted into longer and longer lines of glowing fingers scattered widely over the plain. — Ruin, desolation, destruction — blackened fields and bits of charred fence lines lay in the wake of the fire.

— The Vaca Mts. burned over repeatedly. Regarding Indian fires in Sierras, see Univ. Cal. Publ. Archae. & Ethn. 31: 363; a definite a remarkable statement about Indian practice.

— Geology of the Potrero Hills and Vacaville region. T. I. Bailey (Univ. Cal. Publ. Geol. vol. 19, no. 15).

— When guests left our house, after a call or a days visit, especially the latter, we went out to the wagons with them, to see them off and wave good-bye. So did our friends with us when we went to see them. It is a Southern custom, amongst the wealthy or the less well to-do, a universal custom.

But the New Englanders and New Yorkers did not do this and I well remember how my manners failed for once. A hostess said to me very pointedly in her parlor: "Willie, we will take leave of you here." I realized instantly that my usual habits in this manner must be revised, and new conventions at once substituted. — Mar. 6. 1931.

Books.

- Books were scarce - at least boys books. I came along in the lean and fearful and drought years of 1875-1880 or 1881 - the time when a boy begins an interest in reading. My father thought the small family library good enough for any boy who really wanted to read: The Bible, The History of the Jews by Josephus, Fox's Martyrs, Paley's Evidences of Christianity, Dicks Works and many others of similar character. In one way or another I learned of other books better suited to the adventurous spirit of my mind. Occasionally the ranch workmen would have a dime novel and I would devour it. Dime novels have my highest approval to this day. I can find warrant for them in my Shakespeare. They were wonderful. How could anyone resist such thrilling passages as those written by* the real artist in dime-novel production. Then the school library purchased the full set of Rollo books and I read them all, but tho' meat for my omnivorous appetite they did not impress me deeply. One day during school at the Vacaville Grammar School it was plain that something mysterious was going amongst the boys of my age — especially the town boys. An air of mystery, of secrecy, of dark enterprise or foiled effort, of fearful strain or urgency beset the group and had no relation to their studies or to the games on the play ground. Soon I learned the cause of all this. A most wonderful book on bears, grizzly bears at

that,* and bear hunting, was being passed around from boy to boy. It was a book of several hundred pages but no boy having tasted once of its pages could let it go. The excitement centered around this. The book, The Adventures of James Capen Adams, Mountaineer and Grizzly Bear Hunter of California, by Theodore H. Hittell, belonged to Matt Barnes, one of our school mates. Matt in pride of possession loaned the book for a few minutes, to a chum. While the chum was reading it, another boy became infected by reading a little over his shoulder. The infection was too much. The third boy took the book, secreted it, to read and the war was on. The book was successfully hidden and passed from boy to boy in the school, with Matt all the while making desperate efforts to recover his book. No wonder the air was tense*; no wonder excitement reached a pitch never before known. The book was finally passed to me - put in my dinner pail. Some one told Matt but he was too late. I was on my riding pony and away. It was Friday afternoon and all the hours were mine until Monday for those delectable pages - a hundred marvellous adventures right in our own Sierra Nevada where the grizzly at that time still existed - alive! On Monday morning I went early to school (I had a great deal of freedom as to home and seldom did I abuse it) and turned the book over to another boy. Matt challenged me early but I told him truthfully I had it not.

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* cf. p. 140.

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* cf. p. 142.

However, within two days after that Matt detected the book in transit from one boy to another and after a lively scuffle claimed his own again, and bore the book triumphantly home once more.

This book was well written. The author, Thedore H. Hittell, was a newspaper man, of scholarly training, who afterwards wrote a History of California. Printed in San Francisco in 1860, the edition soon went out of print. It was not until 1911 that it was reprinted by Charles Scribners Sons in New York City and remembering my boyhood experience I purchased a copy and read it again with much enjoyment. When later, however, I tried to buy it for presents to friends, I found it had gone out of print once more – March 9, 1931.

– One of the most thrilling episodes with books, in my young days, had to do with an author that in that day thrilled juveniles as well as grown-ups with his tales of amazing journeys about the earth. One day Wilson Bailey loaned me a copy of Jules Verne's Round the World in Eighty Days, and made me thereby indebted to him for life. At once there was opened up to me a world of which I had not dreamed – a realm of vivacity, courage, spirit adventure and daring. At once I devoured the book and re-read it a half-dozen times before returning it to its owner*. It was a cheap paper-covered translation in quarto with a highly colored

picture on the back, but none of the solid books in calf-skin from the college library could have pleased me one-tenthousandth so well. Adventure, the open road, wonderful things ever before one – I was then ready for the same author's Ten thousand leagues under the Sea, which fully and irrevocably established Jules Verne in my boyhood favor.

There were other highly popular books going around at that time – romances for grown-ups. I read them but counted them poor poor stuff. They were emotional novels and the "agony" in them left a bad taste in my mouth. The very names of them I have forgotten, except perhaps one or two. One was East Lynne by Mrs. Henry Wood, counted a supreme creation in its hey-day.

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* See p. 72.

— The everlasting hills. See F.B. 33:9.
The yellow foothills. See F.B. 24:131.

— The Coyote was one of the Indian Gods. The native tribesman respected his shrewdness, cunning and foresight. The Indians' attitude was entirely different from that of the White Man.

— Al Steiger says that the early day road through Lagoon Valley ran on the east side of Lagoon Lake, and not on the west side, thence between a little round hill and the main Araquipa Hills before turning to the right into Lagoon Pass. It was characteristic of early day roads to run along the edges of the hills and not cut straight across the valley floors. The valley floors were marshy, swampy or cut by deep-lying stream beds, or they were too sandy for wagons to pull through.
— May 21, 1931.

A Trip to Putah Pass.

How much we looked forward to it! With what excitement we thought of it all along the way. How we thrilled as we neared the Devils Gate with its towering rock ledges. And the turtles sunning themselves in the water – by the hundreds! Greatest of all shows was the Red Bud trees in March. Naked of leaf the low branching trees burst suddenly into flower, the clusters of pink-red blossoms clothing the branches from top to bottom. A glowing and inspiring sight. But soon the flowers fade and the leaves come. By May the shrubs are in full leaf, the pods are full grown as to size and make masses of crimson legumes which hang in fine clusters, a wonderful foil to the green leaves. So our interest in this shrub never slackened — it always has some new mood for every season of the year. The pods are dead ripe and brown by July and August with their quota of hard, very hard seeds. But the sweetest of all sweet times is when the shrubs are in full flower, and scarcely less so when the crimson pods flush so colorfully in the May time. —

Mar. 23, 1931.

— "All men, whatever be their condition, who have done anything of merit, or which verily has a semblance of merit, if so be they are men of truth and good repute, should write the tale of their life with their own hand." — Benvenuto Cellini, Autobiography, p. 1.

For pure delight it is yet even more pleasant to write the story of one's boyhood, days endeared by happiest memories, days free, ever-widening, filled with a thousand bright prospects and care-free anticipations.

Ink.

— As a small child I thought ink very wonderful. On great occasions and small it stirred the imagination. By ink were written out a deed to land, to pass from one man to another, to have and to hold in possession, his heirs and assigns forever. By ink letters were written that went far away across those mountains, stern and snow-covered that banked summer clouds on our eastern horizon, far away to loved ones left behind in that remote region called "the States". By ink a teacher was summoned from some distant place to come to our country school in over-lordship. By ink lovers wrote letters kept strangely and mysteriously close so that no one in the world might know about the magic words contained therein. No boy or maid in the school used ink; only the teacher used ink for the writing in the great book of the school record; the rest of us at our desks used slates and slate-pencils, or in class the blackboards that on every side of the schoolroom lined its walls. — Mar. 24, 1931.

— In the starvation year, winter of 1876-77, the country looked terribly. The wild life, however, still gave a sense of animation and fulness to the land. The wild geese came down the migrating lanes in great flocks as usual. The ground squirrels were wonderfully thick in that day. In the lean years they feasted on tid-bits — namely grasshoppers. — May 20, '31.

— Went today, Monday, March 31, to Little Oak Ranch from Berkeley. The country beautifully green but the spring too far advanced for the season — too little rain, too much warmth.

I noticed at once that both creeks are dry. There were only slight puddles in the Alamo at Dickie place. Lee Gates, speaking of the Alamo in Gates Cañon says that never before has there been a winter in which the Alamo failed to run. It failed to run this winter. — Apr. 1, 1931.

— "The year 1876-77 was one of the worst in rainfall on record" — Huntington, Climatic Factors (Carnegie Publ.) p. 164.

— Roman Farm Management. Cato. Translation. McMillan (1913).

— Odors and sounds of the older days.

Cooking apricots — the aroma of them diffused through the house — a fine heartening odor telling of good eating.

The neighing of a horse* — how characteristic a sound — often heard when the wind changed or of evenings.

Alamo Creek, a good deal of water in it! — July 25, 1942. Much like old times!

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* I mean the neighing when he is lost or apart from his fellows, and is neighing anxiously for them.

The Road to Suisun

— Color in the flat fields, and the shallow pools of the early spring: Eryngium vaseyi filling with a sea-green hue, the borders of Baeria, and Blow-wives scattered over the grassy fields.

But we mostly went in the summer time when the picture of the brown hills with their warm tones became deeply etched in the mind. We saw little life on these trips. Sometimes a curlew would be seen on some alkali spot, suddenly darting up with its vibrant shrill note.

— Weeds in Vaca Valley. F. B. 1:180.

— When the Pineapple Weed begins to appear in the hard ground along paths and by roadways, then these days are the beginning of summer and spring has gone!

May Day in the English Hills

It must have been May 1 of 1875, I think, that the May Day was held in the English Hills. Possibly a year earlier or later. I was pretty small and not over seven or eight years old. It was a beautiful day – sunny fleckless sky, bright cool air, no wind. I remember well the procession of spring wagons and carriages after descending the round hill by the Irishman's corner on the straight level stretch of road in front of the ranch, afterwards W.W. Smith's. Probably not Smith's at that time, tho it may have been. A party of people on this lane tried to pass us on this lane – and my father's mettle was stirred immediately. Away we went, the carriage horses flying under the whip, my mother frightened for fear we should over-turn, my sisters on the back seat screaming – at

least Frances and Mary, the two younger. Finally the race was over, we prevented them from passing us and again we trotted leisurely in the now thick procession of wagons to an oak-dotted glade somewhere behind Dunn's Peak. What a festive scene. Everyone scattered over the clean glade, little groups here and there making ready to enjoy the day, the fresh colors of the girls dresses, the boys in their best clothes, not to speak of the bunting on the candy and lemonade stands. Everyone was talking and visiting and renewing old acquaintance. Then promptly at twelve o'clock everyone prepared for lunch – the white cloths spread on the grass and heaped high with the best things to eat – roast chicken, fried chicken, pies and cakes of all kind and crackly biscuits, doughnuts and short-bread

– Cont. p. 61 –

— Went to Little Oak July 1. The apricot trees at Thomasson sta., lower Suisun Valley, are loaded with near-ripe but *not* ripe fruit. At Little Oak the crop has been gone two weeks and it was ripe on June 1! (— July 1, 1931.)

— Met Lee McCrary in Vacaville. He told a story of my sister Frances. She rode a spirited horse that had one defect. He wouldn't go across the bridge at Alamo Creek. The determined rider backed him across! This peculiarity of the horse I knew well at the time — but it had become dormant in my memory.
— July 1, 1931.

— There was, when I was a child, 3 to 5 or 6, much death in our neighborhood. The neighbors met at the graveyard to dig the grave. However, Jim Marshall would not come. He said he had

enough money to dig his grave when he died. The custom grew out of the early days when there was no regular gravedigger in the little community. And then there were poor people who could not afford the expense, but were eager to join with their neighbors and repay the debt to others. Jim Marshall lived to a time when the old custom quite passed out. — Jly 31, 1931.

— The Pack Pedlar — We saw him coming far down the road — moving slowly but steadily under his great burden. His visit was an event in the household. He brought atmosphere of far-off worlds — laces from France, linen from Ireland, colored silks from India, a rare shawl from Persia — and strange odds and ends of all kind. The man himself with his alien accent, swarthy features and tricks of the trader was an introduction in a small way to marts and merchants far beyond our horizons. When I saw arabs, Syrians, Turks bearing great burdens – unbelievable weights – in Constantinople, Haifa, Cairo in later years, I thought of the childhood pedlar as he raised to his back a weight which seemed to my childhood eyes miraculous. – July 31, 1931.

– A fauna, marine shells, is found in Middle Eocene shales in the sides of Ulatis Creek just under Dunns Peak. The technical description of them occurs in Univ. Cal. Publ. Geol. Sciences, 14: 289-318 (1923).

–. The bath-tub at home when I was a child was a wooden tub about 3½ feet in diameter and 1½ feet deep. It was a wooden tub and was moved about where needed. There was only one and

we littlest, my little brother and myself, noticed that there was considerable competition for its use on the part of the members of the family older than ourselves. There was none on our part. No small boy likes to get his feet or his ears, far removed organs of his anatomy, wet in a bath tub or any metal receptacle. The swimming hole in the creek is a different matter. During the summer there was a compromise as to week days in the matter of home bathing. We must wash our feet in a basin each night before going to bed; which ritual being performed was accepted in lieu of ablution of the whole body. But the washing of feet was rigidly exacted. It seemed to us a very useless ceremony, because were we not going right out into the dust the very next day; and the whole country was deep in dust the entire long long summer. Washing of feet! What an ancient custom — connected with the oldest of religious observances and especially in hot countries. cf. Kitto's Cyclop. p. 779. When I was a guest at Gravetye Manor in 1905, on returning from a day in the woods with Mr. Robinson, there was brought into my spacious bedroom in this manorhouse of the county of Sussex, built in the days of Queen Elizabeth, a bathtub. This was set in the middle of the floor and filled with hot water brought from the kitchen! The practice is nowise different from early day California usage in Solano Co. — for in Solano Co. I never saw a modern bath-tub until I was say 25 years old. — Sept. 13, 1931.

— The flowering of the alkali patch at Little Oak — a spirited account of the spring flush on the white alkali. See F. B. 7:119. See also p. 33 seq., The Spring-time Flush on the Playas.

— No place where there has been a human habitation but that shows it for decades on decades. Does the fact of human dwelling ever become obliterated? Down the Brock road a mile, on the west side, lived the Olingers. There is mark there visible still. Down the east lane lived Johnny Foree say 75 years ago. One finds there still bits of broken crockery. — Oct. 11, 1931.

— Old Songs:

"Hard times, hard times, come again no more."
Sung in the hard times following the panic of 1873.

"And the Lark singing home to old Missouri".

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* Mrs. Hutton was an Olinger. The Huttons owned the place west of us before bought by Butcher.

– When costly summer is at hand.
–Merchant of Venice –

– General Nathan Bedford Forrest, and his critter company. By A. N. Lytle. (Minton Balch Co.)

– Locust (Robinia pseudacacia). cf. "Utilization of Black Locust", U.S.D.A. Circ. 131 (1930).

– How I loved to dance in the old days! Edward Scott has written a book on "Dancing for strength and beauty". An English book. 1921.

– "A bear is the fastest swiftest animal in the world. He can run at an 18-mile an hour clip" – Major A. P. Simmonds, in "Commonwealth" vol. 6, no. 19, p. 91.

– Dr. J. H. B. Anderson is the old-time Methodist preacher who wrote, says Dr. J. A. B. Fry, a history of education in California as furthered by Methodists South. Dr. Fry is not sure that

the ms. was ever finished or that it is in existence. It would naturally tell of the effort at Vacaville in early days. – Oct. 11, 1931.

– Camp Meetings. cf. "Old-time days in Vaca Valley", p. 57. See also Men and Manners, vol. 5, p. 3. The term "Campbellites" is used in Dictionary National Biography, 7:178.

One of the old-time preachers told me that on his circuit he came to a church on a very rainy, stormy and cold Sunday. Only one member of the congregation came. The preacher ascended the pulpit and conducted the services and preached his best sermon! Said the preacher to me: I was not justified in neglecting the Lord's duty so long as there was one come to worship! It reminds me of Kipling's poem.

Queries

- Turtles – ever taken by eagles?
- Road Runners in Vaca Valley dist?
- Buzzards in flocks, roosting?
- Do ground owls move much around at night?* Yes. Coming from Sweeney Creek on Sunday night, back to Little Oak, I saw at two different places a ground owl flying low. – 1933.

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* Query justified by reason of their constant appearance in day time.

The Native Flowers.

- cf. an account of Bull Clover or Farded Clover in Jepson Corr. vol. 20, p. 351.
- cf. top p. 29 ante.
- The beauty of the playae. cf. F. B. 39: 163.
- Lakes of gold; streams of white; the picture of the Downingias (cf. F. B. 32: 199-200).
- Erysimum almost extinct – used to be common. – R. H. Platt in litt. June 15, 1917. This refers to E. asperum.
- Solano County is extremely diverse in its vegetation – the salt marshes at Suisun, the
- river lowlands above Rio Vista, the great plain of the central part of the county, the foothills, the Vaca Mountains. Since a corner of the county runs west from Suisun Valley, we have a part of the Napa Range in the county, which gives us floral features different from the characteristic interior vegetation. Rhododendron occidentale has been collected above Green Valley by H. E. Copeland no. 606. There are other things there, not characteristic of typical Solano Co., which I do not recall at the moment.

— I turned up today a plant I collected at Pigeon Point in the spring of 1885, namely Convolvulus subacaulis. I must have gotten it on the little ledge that outcrops in Captain Chinn's field. Probably it is long extinct there. — Nov. 19, 1936.

On Apr. 12, 1936, came a letter from Millard Sharpe, son of Geo. Sharpe: "I was up in Gates Cañon yesterday and I wished you might be there: it was beautiful and a lot of flowers in bloom. They have fixed the road and you'd be happy there for a day." "I was by the old house the other day. It is pretty on the plain now. The Tidy Tips are all out and so on."

— Early in the spring, the first native flower to come in the orchard at Little Oak was Montia perfoliata. There was a great deal of it.

— Flight speed. Canada geese, 44 miles an hour. Brant 45 miles. Duck hawk in Cal., 165 to 180 miles chasing its prey. Canvasback (chased by airplane in Cal.) 72 miles per hour. Mallards in Cal., 55 miles per hour. — Cal. Ranger, v. 1, no. 47.

— The Woodpeckers, especially El Carpintero, was a common bird amongst our oaks. What delight to equal that of the playground oaks — the Valley Oaks with the ground covered with acorns, the bark studded with acorns set in holes dug by industrious El Carpintero. And how snugly and securely he fits the nuts into the pockets. He cannot be excelled as a carpenter. One cannot pull out with his fingers a nut thus set to save him!

— cf. "The College at the foot of the Hills", pp. 20-21.

— Quail were numerous in early day California. Flocks of 500 were not uncommon in Lake Co. I well remember that we disturbed quail feeding in a large open in the Sierra Nevada on a trip to Yosemite. At the sound of the wagon they started running towards the brush cover. One lot after another, and still another, and yet another, almost indefinitely, — an incredible number — I think there could not have been less than 50,000 and possibly 100,000. This was in 1890 on my trip to Yosemite. In Lake County Ralph Platt and I flushed large numbers in many places.

School

"God give us bases to gaurd or beleaguer,
Games to play out, whether earnest or fun,
Fights for the fearless and goals for the eager,
Twenty and thirty and forty years on"
— Follow Up (Harrow School Song).
(Spr. Republican, 9-3-42.)

The Vineyard

Of all the many kinds of grape in our vineyard I liked best the Muscat of Alexandria. Its flavor is very fine and its tasty meat has an invigorating quality. All the year I looked forward to muscat time. The long dry summer wears on. The days get hotter and hotter. I make frequent trips to the vineyard but the terrible sourness of the green grapes discourages even my enthusiasm. After a great many discouragements of this kind, when it seems as if never again would there be ripe grapes, I forget for a bit, my mind rebuked so frequently, is turned away to other things. Then suddenly the muscats are ripe! One lifts the heavy foliage of the vine and there are the great white bunchclear, almost transparent with a faintly yellowish cast. And in the early morning when the chill is on the grapes. How delicious, how unbelievably satisfying, how stirring of exalted sensations scarcely to be named. Ah, to me, as a lad, it seemed as if this earth were well worth living in forever might one always have Muscat grapes; a gladsome place with a vineyard at hand. One went then to church and heard the thunder of un-namable terrors or at least fearful things. But one came home and went to the vineyard, to the Muscat vines, and all was well again. The church service became a figment or a passing soon-forgotten dream. It is true that there were

other grapes and some came before Muscats. There were Sweet waters. They consoled a bit but were after all pretty poor things, much like sweetened water. They lacked utterly the vigorous exaltation of Muscats; nor were they even a promise, or hint of Muscat. They were, almost, as nothing. — Oct: 31, 1931. See p. 51.

— The calamitous times, 1931-1933, economically, industrially, that have come upon the country recalls former hard times. Although only a young child and knowing nothing of it all, the hard times following the panic of 1873 caused certain impressions to lodge fast in the memory and I can consider that panic a bit and the hard times from remembrance of certain things. One of these remembrances relates to a song sung by my mother of which I remember four lines:

"Many days you have lingered
About my cabin door,
Hard Times, Hard Times,
Come again no more".

Every one who saved their ranches in those days cut out all possible expenses. There were no luxuries or frills of any sort, not even little ones. School books were bought — that was about all. The wheat in those days was hauled to Suisun and made into flour which was brought back home. The ranch was to a large degree self-sustaining. All the laundry and kitchen soap was manufactured on the ranch. All the childrens' clothing, both girls and boys, was made at home. All the beds, bedding and bed-clothes. I never was given a toy. I made [Cont. p. 46].

The Animals.

- Antelope on the plains in early days.
- Elk. cf. "Old-time days in Vaca Valley," p. 140.
  The Elk cannot bend the front leg at the knee, and having short legs they are unable to graze. — Encycl. Britt.
  The individual referred to above, p. 140, must have been browsing on the lines of willows in the gulches, I take it.
- cf. "animals" in Index, p. 205, Old-time days in Vaca Valley.
- Manual of the vertebrates of the U.S. Dr. Henry S. Pratt. 1923.
- The acorn crop a vital necessity to many animals. cf. Yos. Nature Notes, vol. 10, no. 11 (Nov. 1931).

— "I saw the different things you did
But always you yourself you hid." — Stevenson.

But I did not feel that way about the North Wind! It was like a large and terrible giant roaring in the sky, always bringing utter destruction! And the South west Trade, sweet and cool at the end of a fever-heat day, that was like a reassuring angel with soft over-hovering wings

The Araquipa Hills

The lateral ridges on the east side have a remarkable regularity. There are fifteen ridges as I remember them and all lie essentially at right angles to the axis of the ridge. Each of these little ridges is sharply defined against the plain by a little rounded hill or knoll at its foot, though in some of them this structure is not clear — but in most it is marked. These knolls lie nearly in a straight line and doubtless owe their origin to the harder uptilted stratum which cuts across the middle of them northerly and southerly. One can at a distance see this outcrop on most of the knolls. The oak, in scattered groves, covers well the east side of this little range of hills and gives it a

much diversified and pleasing aspect. Nowhere in California with all its foothills have I been able to find hills with just the structure of these — making the same picture.

When one, however, looks at the same range of hills from the west side, from Lagoon Valley, these hills have no distinctive character at all. The simply irregular pattern is one that can be matched in a thousand places about the oval of the Great Valley. — Nov. 22, 1931. Went to Little Oak this day for a flying trip, leaving Berkeley near 11.00, getting back at 5:00.

Araquipa is more commonly, or rather, rightly, correctly spelled Arequipa. But the map of the Araquipa Rancho (April, 1888) spells the word Araquipa, and in my publications I have followed this spelling. Also spelled so in Wickson, Vacaville Fruit Dist.

Lodged Grain

Sometimes in late May or in June would comes an untimely shower – a shower of rain heavy enough to weight the stalks of grain where the grain stands thickest. Usually, perhaps always – indeed I think there is, must be – wind with the rain and under this double influence the grain falls in swaths – broad swaths making heavy patterns through the wheat fields – not as if it had been trampled – but as if a great roller had touched it from above, had rolled across the wheat in fantastic waves. Where the grain stands heavy in a field, the whole field goes down, but not uniformly, swaths lodging against other swaths as the wind currents veered or the weight of water

chanced; thus making strange patterns of destruction all across the land.

The Wheat Fields

The months of the maturing of the grain fields exerted an influence on the mental outlook of a lad. Our living depended mainly on the wheat crop and the chances of flood or drought were carefully weighed and debated. By the middle of May it was pretty well known what the harvest would be, although there was still chances of an extremely drying north wind which might catch the plants in the "milk" stage of their development. Best of all was to see the fields, rippling under the southwest trades, turn from green to gold and to the straw-color of late July. The slender culms, standing so close,

— Cont. p. 107. —

Cont. from bottom p. 40.

my own toys and it was great sport. I made a wagon out of the wheels from gang plows and from stray pieces of oak. It would now be regarded as heavy, but it developed the strength of a growing lad to pull it. And then there were the wild animals and birds to occupy the mind of a lad. One went out on the plain where the wild geese were grazing in countless numbers and the bands of them parted to the right and left like barnyard fowl. A big boy of our nearest neighbor's family gave me a ball when I was little. It was made of rubber, about the size of the present-day baseball, and suitable for playing townball. We knew not baseball then, though in batting

the ball far out into the field we ran a circuit of bases. One had to run all the way "home", but you had the privilege of actually *striking* the ball three times before running. That is if your first hitting of the ball did not drive the ball sufficiently far into the field to warrant an attempt at running the circle then you could try twice more. If you struck at the ball and missed, that did not count.

My cousin Everett Williams was given the "Youths Companion" by his father. It came monthly. I burned with desire for this boy's paper; it would have bliss even if I could have seen a single copy – but Eve would not let me look at it for even a moment. I was beyond the pale — I was not a Campbellite. Realizing this fully — and being wilfully set on not being one — I never asked to see his boys paper but once.

If I had been sufficiently subservient and fawning I would have had the advantage of being somewhat tolerantly regarded by the Campbellites. But I stuck independently on my own ground and accepted the conditions of school life as being in control of the Campbellites and their hangers-on. The school-teacher finally was a Campbellite — and what a mean one. His name was Wood and he delighted in showing the Campbellites that he was of them. It was my earliest experience of a clique, which is a form of gangsterism. Soon I went to the grammar school in the town. Vacaville was

but a tiny village, yet the school had two teachers. Small as the place was it nevertheless had for me the spirit of a metropolis. The school did not know anything about religion or care. No boy was judged by the church his people belonged to. It was not even known, or if known not thought of. The place had in this respect the broad spirit of a metropolis though I merely accepted the new conditions without knowing the reasons. I accepted the new conditions joyfully. It changed me at once. At once I began to expand. I took my proper place in the games on the school grounds and developed an intense love of play which never left me. It was for me a miraculous change.

The Williams boys, our cousins, and Leila Williams, had many things we had not at all. Toys and playthings. They lost their ranch, which was a fine one. Not because of spending money on toys, but because such spending was typical of their general expenditure, and their general expenditure could not be met by the ranch income in those hard years. — Dec. 27, 1931.

— The woodhouse was tightly closed, the bacon hung high and a smoke fire put on the floor, the fire made by the use of grapevine cuttings.

— Vaca Valley. Proposed flora list. cf. Men & Manners, vol. 12, p. 486.

And I with earth and nightfall
In converse high would stand,
Late, till the west was ashen
And darkness hard at hand
And the eye lost the land.
— A. E. Housman, Last Poems, p. 73.

The Vineyard

How I loved grapes! How expectantly I looked forward for months and months to grape time. It was always the most wonderful time. This earth seemed to me a most wonderful place in which to live because there were such fine vineyards where small boys might feast at will. And when we went away from home on a wagon journey, for a day or more, regretfully thoughts centered on the vineyard. But there were home vineyards everywhere. And as we passed one, driving on the road, how full of enchantment each one seemed. What new and novelly delicious varieties might be there. What allurements were concealed beneath those broad grape leaves. And I marveled that my parents could drive sedately by without even a look. Why not stop and go in and thus enter another magic land. Any one might, indeed, whenever he chose. Hundreds of passersby helped themselves to what they wished to eat from our vineyard and no one hindered. When I was quite small I never heard, indeed, of grapes being sold— not from a home vineyard. The home vineyard was an almost holy spot — never to be degraded to the level of cents or of dollars.

The Sweets Pantry.

Of all things in the sweets pantry none were to compare with preserved peaches. Such deliciousness was in no other thing compressed into equal space. They were prepared slowly, lovingly on a great shallow pan on

the back of the kitchen stove so that the cooking process might be very slow. It lasted over weeks. The hue of this gold-brown confection tintillated the senses. In the mouth its ineffable sweetness, rich, smooth and animating, sent over the whole body a satisfied and soothing sensation that put me in full and harmonious accord with the universe.

The Village.

The village was a quiet place— a truly country village. Sounds there were, the most distinctive the clang of the anvil in the blacksmith shops. The most distinctive, the most picturesque was Cernon's, Hugh Cernon the smith, a large place, tremendous, cavernous, with great recesses and nooks, and a wagon shop on one side where wagons were built

December in the Hills.

To come back to ones own land after an absence from midsummer is to find a great change. All the orchard trees are cheerless and bare — not one retains a leaf. The hills, too, look a bit gaunt or denuded. The hollows in the Araquipa Hills are filled with the whitish skeletons of the Buckeyes. The Blue Oaks stand grayish and austere, the few Valley Oaks much like them. An occasional spot of green against the Interior Live oak makes a dark dull background of the hill slope. After all there is a certain interest in a winters walk to the top of the ridge. The views are brilliant on a clear day. The Sierran snows show their broadest fields; the Marysville Buttes lift their most

ragged outlines; and all the near-lying farm country presents a severe and sober outline far away from summer's softness. — Jan. 8, 1932.

The one touch of charm finds it highest note in the mistletoe on the Buckeye — the light yellow leaves and pearl-like berries in their fine clusters.

— The vineyard at home. In the home vineyard my interest was greater and deeper than in the orchard, the fig rows, the walnut grove, the wheat fields, the pasture lot. I luxuriated in it during the long grape season. It was many many years later that I saw graperies in the deserts and I did not realize as a lad that our Vitis vinifera grapes all came from Old World deserts. The grape belongs to hot climates! In our valley there is, along streams in the cañons, a native grape — but it does not extend out into the valley — nor along the valley streams. Its fruit grow is small and almost too acid to eat at all — but the berries make a marvelously fine jelly.

The Country School.

One of the most entrancing books in the school was the geography with its pictures of strange lands and outlandish naked people. Description and travel filled those pages, and stirred in one the sense of adventure and excitement, intensified by the colored* maps which portrayed the boundless earth, the continents, ones own country, then the state of California and finally, right in the back pages, most wonderful of all, the group of counties where one lived. For right there on the map of Solano County was the very creek that gave up our summer swimming holes with its name plain to read, Alamo Creek. And through the windings of the Alamo one ranged afar – to the wide steppes of Siberia and the sunny vales of Spain.

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* It was the only book in the school that had the glamor of color on its pages.

The Shrubs in the Mountains.

- Chamiez. "Cloud shadows" cf. F. B. 33:32. Tawny or red-brown effects = dried panicles. cf. F. B. 39:27.
- "Going up into the blue brush".

On all the main ridge of the Vaca Mountains the chaparral holds the slope. This brush is of many species – shrubs of many different sizes, shapes, habits, aspect. But at a distance they flow into each other and produce the characteristic blue of the high ridges. Such ridges would not be blue were they naked, without any woody cover. Thus it is that our people say: "We are going up into the blue brush today", without thinking of any one species of shrub, but of the brush formation as a whole. cf. F.B. 11:136.

A Day in Vaca Valley.

cf. Men and Manners, vol. 14, p.

Old-time School Days

Echoes, faint, far-away, sometimes tantalizing, rise in memory of the Friday afternoon exhibitions at the school — the "pieces" the pupils declaimed. Today I ran across a volume, a collection of old-time poems. It surprised me to find to what degree they are emotional and sentimental. Some are on a higher level, though still much in the sentimental class, poems by Wordsworth and O. W. Holmes. Old-time favorites were: Patter of the Rain, p. 173; Little Brown Hands, p. 271; Rock me to Sleep (Elizabeth Akers Allen), p. 215; De Massa ob de Sheepfol, p. 133. The finest in the book is maybe "God Give us Men" by J. G. Holland, p. 467. The collection is a very unscholarly one; authors are not given when in some cases the lack seems due to laziness in not tracing the author. The book title is "Heart Throbs". — St. Helena Sanitarium Library

Early Day Phrases

- "Favored": "She favored her father" = resembled.
- "Hit" = it.
- "Don't care if I do", meaning I am willing: "I don't care if I go"
- "Wear you out" — get a good whipping.
- "Adam's off-ox".
- "Tough as whang-leather"
- Dew-dabs.
- "Whifling".
- "Dausie", pronounced, dawnsie; meaning weak, uncertain of living, poorly nourished.
- "The devil and Tom Walker". This I heard used a good deal but knew not the story behind it. It is listed in B. A. Botkin, A Treasury of American Folklore - 1944.
- "Sam Hill" was an expletive used by my neighbor Dan Faree. I know not the why of it.

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cf. "Language of the Southern Highlanders" in Publications of the Modern Language Association of America, Dec. 1931, p. 1304.

The Sleepy Hills.

"Oh my native hills! thou has lifted me onto thy shoulders in my youth that I might see the distant and beckoning scene. In such ways thou hast pointed me forth to remote places. But always thou hast welcomed my returnings. Enfold me at last under thy comforting shelter and take back again the particles of thy substance and the trace of thy granite without which for better or worse I could not have been I." — Robert Fellows Wood, in Springfield Republican, Oct. 17, 1940.

The Village

A characteristic feature was the hitching rack. Here farmers tied their teams for the time they did business in the village. The earth became excavated near the posts; the stamping of the shod feet

— Cont. p. 200 —

— Cont. from p. 23 —

and cookies almost too delicious for belief. But even the best repast must have an end and so after thus eating with your friends about you, the gustatory circle dissolved in order to witness the games of the afternoon. One of these — the most thrilling was called the tournament because a lineal descendant of the ancient tournament of England when armored knights jousted for ladies favors. A tall post held a cross bar with a wire pendent from it, the wire so bent at the bottom as to hold horizontally an ivory harness ring. The contenders, mounted, came forward at a gallop and speared the ring. If they took of the ring on the spear it was counted as a hit. It was clever to be able to meet the conditions of a gallop and yet have your horse go slowly and steadily enough to permit the ring to be easily speared.

Happy May days in the English Hills! How we looked forward to the occasions for weeks and made every preparation for their enjoyment. It was the one festival in the year of which we were sure. Christmas required money and there was not much Christmas some years on account of the hard times. Sometimes there was a Fourth-of-July celebration — but it was uncertain and did not carry the sylvan out-of-door delights that went with May Day — purest and sweetest festival of the year.

[July, 1932].

— Hawkins ranch. cf. Men and Manners notebook, vol. 14, p. 93.

The Orchard Trees

One of the sweetest of fruits was the Mission Fig, brought by the Franciscan Fathers from Spain via Mexico into California, and thus distributed through all valleys with hot dry summers. The tree did well with us, its great trunk parting into huge arms and making a broad round crown that rested on the ground. It was a nice tree for a boy to climb. Best of all it bore two crops of fruit, the early crop ripening in the last day of June and early July made a large luscious fig that we liked best when so dead ripe as to hang limply straight down on its branch. The second crop came in September and was rather more abundant but the figs were smaller. The figs fell to the ground and cured of themselves in our arid summers, and thus gathered and stored before the rains we had dried figs to eat all winter. The history of the Mission Fig is a rarely interesting one. The trees as the decades passed became impressively large and gave to the home an air of nobility. — Aug. 1932.

The yellowing of the orchard foliage in the autumn was often a glowing sight in the fall. The apricot coloration was sometimes tangible sunshine.

The figs at Little Oak are now 66 years old. Drought in the last ten years has been hard on them and this year, 1933, and last, 1932, the tops have broken badly.

cf. "Fig Culture in California by Ira J. Condit (Cal. Agr. Extension Service, Circ. 77, Oct. 1933.). History of introduction of Mission Fig, p. 3.

— Almond Culture in California. Cal. Agr. Extension Service. Circular 103. Jan, 1932.

The Migrating Geese

The wild geese began to come down from the far north in October and November. All summer they had been in the marshes and small lakes spread in countless numbers over the vast uninhabitated wilderness of northern lands bordering the arctic ocean — feeding in a land of plenty and breeding — in a land care-free of white men. Now they are going south to escape the rigors of the northern winter — south to the highlands of Mexico. Flocks of them in orderly v-shaped formations moving steadily and rapidly with seemingly mathematical precision through the sky — countless seigments of these flyers, one after another, moving on and on, signaling their way with occasional loud cries their places in the blue overhead taken by fresh companies as they kept moving steadily and rapidly on. From early

-morn, the endless procession went on all day, and far into the night the call of the migrants we heard overhead as we lay snug in our beds. The quiet autumn days were wonderfully animated by this marvelous procession. Or, again, in days of wind, they must fight upwards:

"Etched on the East, like lines on lead,
Against the wind the wild geese
climb."

— At the Faculty Club this morning, at the breakfast table, Dr. Willz said: "I am listening for geese, but have heard none yet. In the old days they began to come from the north from October 8 to 14; after that there were at once vast hordes of them." — Oct. 1, 1937. That is to say the skies were alive with them.

— At Little Oaks and the round-about valley floor were numerous doves. One saw them sitting on the fence-lines, one heard them in the trees — their soothing note mellowed the air and proclaimed the sweet peace of the countryside. When far away or here in Berkeley I miss most their gentle note.

The Trees of the Vaca Mts.

The Vaca Mts. is an arid range with few species of trees and limited woodland, but abundant chaparral. It seems to me likely that the range once had more extensive woodlands than at present, and probably possessed species not existing now in this range. It would seem likely to have had Pinus ponderosa. The altitude is sufficient, though the dryness is a point against it. Nevertheless the range may have had at one time moister conditions. Repeated fires make a fair land into a desert land. The presence of Torreya californica in the range is an indication of fairer woodlands at one time in the past than now. Further, Neat M. Tate tells me that he has found Arbutus menziesii* in the range, I think he said Gates Cañon. This is a most

* I myself saw it earlier.

significant kind for it argues distinctly that a heavier rainfall or more humid conditions once existed. Neat says that he has also discovered Anemone grayi in the Vaca Mts. (Gates Cañon).

— Trees in our region are fit, economically, only for fuel, speaking broadly. Construction lumber was brought in from the outside. I write a query this wise;

Dear Miss Harbison. —

I wish you would, sometime, ask Mrs. Harbison if there has come down to her any traditions regarding the origin of the Redwood lumber used in building the first cabins in Vaca Valley. Where did it come from? How did it get there? On this subject I have some interesting matter from Meredith Miller. There is no native tree in Vaca Valley fit for construction uses, unless it be the White Alder and there is very little of that; but I often wondered

if the Digger Pine were ever used as a makeshift. A slant on this I have from Meredith who says it was used somewhat in the original Miller home in Pleasants Valley. Yours Sincerely, Willis L. Jepson.

Origin of Redwood lumber used in Vaca Valley.

— On Christmas Day, 1932, I went to the Leon J. Richardsons, Southampton road, in Berkeley, for the Christmas Carol singing. A crowd of people were present. A Mrs. Graham was introduced to me who recognized me as the "tree man" and said: "My father was Jerome B. Ford. He had a redwood mill at Bodega in 1849. Later he went up the coast to Big River, Mendocino Co., and built a mill. His partner there was Williams. Williams was the head of the Vigilance Committee in S. F. His daughter Miss Williams is here this afternoon". In a few moments I was introduced to Miss Williams, a mature woman, who said that she had been a student of mine. It seems that Miss Williams has been working up the vigilante period or notes of her father's life in the History Department or in the Bancroft Library. — Jan. 3, 1932

The above is interesting because there is a hazy tradition in my mind that our Vaca Valley redwood lumber came from Bodega! And yet I did not know that there were any Redwood trees at Bodega, that is, quite near.

On Charter Day, 1933, I sat at luncheon at the President's House next to Mrs. Guy Earl who said that her father's name was Ford, that he started a redwood mill at Bodega in gold days; was a partner of Williams (see p. 69). Did I make a mistake in the name Graham, or is Graham a sister?

Persistence of the native Flora in Vaca Valley.

This spring of 1932 I was much struck by the persistence of certain native species along fence lines, species that, otherwise, would have been extinguished by cultivation. Lathyrus californicus is frequent on fence lines at Little Oak. Echinocystis fabacea is especially abundant this spring, hanging its drapery of foliage over the wires for yards and yards. It is likely that its seeds are gathered and stored by squirrels, and in this way the species is spread. Or possibly Blue Jays may handle the seeds.

– weeds in Vaca Valley. See F. B. 36:151.
1:180.

– Persistence of native plants in Vaca Valley, F. B. 36:48.

– Again this summer I noticed the great amount of Echinocystis fabacea on the orchard fence along the lane. There is also much of it in the grain fields where it must have persisted since aboriginal days — July, 1933. There is a great patch of Sambucus glauca coming up in Dickie field opp. Little Oak gate. — Apr. 1934.

Books

– Continued from * p. 12

It was always my practice to return a book promptly to its owner. In this way I established a good credit and was favored with books more than most.

– The Dime Novel was everywhere. Devouring everything I read them too, but they did not satisfy, they did not seem like the real thing. The bombast and exaggeration palled upon me; the pages did not ring true. Many writers of the dime novel had never seen the West. But the titles were marvelous:

Buffalo Billy, the Boy Bullwhacker; or, the Doomed Thirteen. A Strange Story of the Silver Trail.

Tucson Tom, The Bowie Bravo; or, The Five Trailers.

Kiowa Charley, The White Mus-

tanger; or, Rocky Mountain Kit's Last Scalp Hunt.

Alligator Ike; or, The Secret of the Everglades? A Tale of the Outlaws of the Okeechobee.

Buffalo Bill's Blue Belt Brigade; or, Sunflower Sam of Shasta.

Spokane Saul, The Samaritan Suspect; or, The Double Twist at Camp Sahara.

And many more. Few of these did I have from school-mates, mostly from the laborers on the ranch at Little Oak. Instinctively I recognized their spurious character. Hittell's Grizzly Bear Hunter was instantly appreciated. It was the faithful story day by day of one who himself had fought and trapped Grizzly Bears in the Coast Range and Sierras, who knew the mountains, the hills and rivers. Here was real thrill.

The Horses.

When a saddle was thrown on our saddle horses they demonstrated their intelligence. Before the cinch could be applied the horse would begin to swell, so that the cinch would scarcely go around. It was hard work overcoming that swell. One pulled on the cinch with all one's might. One unbalanced the horse a trifle and he thrusts out the forefoot on that side and comes down on your toes, perhaps your bare toes. Smothering angels!! Is there any agony to equal that? The weight of a horse. And can you with all your screams make the horse move? Not a particle – he stands firm as the Rock of Ages and as long. And then you strike him an awful thump in the belly and he jumps and releases you to a continued pain that is intolerable. One learned in time to keep his toes out of the way of a saddle horses feet.

– Seats and Saddles, Bits and Bitting, Draught and Harness. by Francis Dwyer. [London.]

– A Quarter Horse. cf. Col. Ranger, vol. 11, no. 37 (8-9-'40).

The Mule.

– No small boy likes water in, around or near his ears. Neither does a mule. "If a mule gets water in his ears he will drown."– This last sentence is a statement made by Mrs. Morton of Dyerville, Humboldt Co. in Aug. 1932. As to the small boy's aversion to water about his ears I can myself testify. This washing of one's ears by one's elders I regarded as little less than a studied outrage, an assault upon one's independence, a striking at the very roots of the most cherished liberties of a boy.

– Aug. 19, 1932

– Did the Romans discuss the Mule?
Cato? Pliny?

– cf. verse skit c. p. 35 poetry scrap book.

– cf. Jas. LeConte, Autobiography, p. 283-4.

– See indices to volumes of "Men and Manners".

– Magner, D. Standard Horse and Stock Book. Battle Creek, Mich. 1889. The Mule, p. 263.

– Geo. Washington is said by some

to have been the first farmer in the New World to breed mules.

— And these are the children of Zibeon; both Ajah and Anah; this was that Anah that found the mules in the wilderness, as he fed the asses of Zibeon, his father. — Genesis, 36, 24.

— Then all the King's sons arose and every man gat him upon his mule and fled, — 2 Samuel, 13. 29.

— And Absalom rode upon a mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth; and the mule that was under him went away. — 2 Samuel 18. 9.

— Ferris, W. A., Life in the Rocky Mts.; pp. 9, 16, 21; see also index.

Trees along the water courses.

The valleys were naked save for the scattered trees of the Valley Oak but along the water courses was a thin screen of trees, mainly willows, some Fremont Cottonwood and some Valley oak. Occasional Buckeyes, too, grew on the stream banks. While the Buckeye is outstandingly a tree of the foothills, there are, even at this day, a few along the watercourses. On the Alamo at Wemple Ranch (the old Williams place), there is one tree, perhaps more, near the Jewett Bridge. I noted it in flower in June, 1932. Near the Cooper School, at the same time, I noticed Ailanthus glandulosus spontaneous.

— Buckeye; F. B. 1:184.

— We admired vastly the Maple Tree, the Big-leaf Maple of California (Acer macrophyllum), but it is a rare tree in our region and restricted to the water courses. I collected it in Miller Cañon, Sept. 21, 1891. I suppose there only a few individuals, and yet, just across Gordon Valley, in the Napa

Range it is an important tree of the woodlands, on the open slopes.

— A census of the oaks in Hawkins field and along Alamo Creek. cf. F. B. 6:60.

— J. M. Brazelton tells me that since 1911 he has taken out every year, from the Dutton Cañon hill, 100 cords of fire-wood (stove-wood) as a minimum, sometimes 400 cords. I estimate roughly he has taken out 5000 cords. I estimate that since 1860, at least 200,000 cord has been taken out of the hills — that is Blue Oak, Black Oak, Valley Oak and Manzanita. — Jan, 8, 1938.

— The Home. — Cordwood for fuel in the home was brought home from the hills in the fall and thrown out in a pile. All the stove fuel was neatly piled in the woodshed. Heavy pieces and miscellaneous pieces of wood made up the wood-pile. The term wood pile corresponds to wood-lump, the Sussex term in England.

Buzzards in the Blue

— In idle hours one watched the buzzards in the sky, wheeling without concert and yet seeming to make a broad wave-like rythm in the sky. In idle hours? No! Only in retrospect! As a lad I had always things to do: there were gear to make for Indian fights; there was the badger hole to visit on the banks of the Alamo; there were squirrels to chase to their ground holes; endless things to occupy ceaselessly every waking moment. I stood watching the buzzards sailing in long sweeping circles in the faint blue dome, absorbed, earnest and intent. Sister Mary called: Louis, go help Mother. I'm busy, I replied. What are you doing? Don't bother me, I'm busy! But what are you doing? the insistent sister. Can't you see what I am doing? and then I stood stock still watching the complex but stately evolutions of twenty buzzards in the sky.

The Small Animals

- cf. The Berkeley Hills (Notebook) p. 37
- cf. p. 15 ante.

Illustrations: All features of the old life at Little Oak. The various orchard trees in bloom, etc. The wheat; see cover of Farmers' Bulletin No. 1902 (Varieties of Spring Wheat for the North Central States.

– In the earliest days that I remember the Justice of the Peace of the township of Vacaville was always called "Squire", after the ancient English custom. I remember Squire Gray, an ancient worthy. After him was Squire Ward who held court in his harness repair shop set well back of street village on the north side. Ammons, I think Henry, may have been a "squire" also. He was a notary.

Mortgages

Sixty years mortgage on the Force place. Tommy Force a hard worker. He walks to the village of an evening to Odd Fellows meeting to save his horses.

The small plants.

In the spring-time the grass grew rankly in the yards about the houses. Soon it was cut down and when the dry summer came its place was taken by Door Grass, which wasn't a grass at all but a lowly plant that spread a carpet of pale green over all the yard. We allowed it to grow; it was cool to the eye and in our dry land where water was so scarce it relieved the straw-white or tan-color of the fields and hills. – everywhere the landscape was dazzling under the white-hot sun. We called this lowly plant by the name Yard Grass. Associating always with man about his dwellings it went under a variety of names, such as Door Grass, Beggar Weed, Armstrong, Wire Grass and Iron Grass. It is Polygonum aviculare as named by the great Linnaeus.

Birds

The food migration of the blackbirds was daily a very wonderful thing. The vast number of flocks, the regularity of the passage, gregarious habits in feeding and in singing. My sister Frances in one of her printed articles speaks of the chorus in the walnut grove.

Real food migrations in Siam are indulged in only by members of the pigeon and parrot families says a writer in Science Supplem. — 6-10-'38

Insects

Wingbeats per second: Drosophila, the fruit fly, 9,000 to 13,000; honey bee, 160 to 220; dragon flies, 30; yellow swallow-tail butterfly, 6.

Hummingbird, 50 beats per second.

— Cal. Ranger, vol. 11, no. 36.

— Baird, S.F., Brewer, T.M. & Ridgway, R. North Am. Birds. 5 vols.
— Bent, A.C. Life Histories of N. Am. Birds U.S. Nat. Mus. Bull. nos. 126, 130, 113.

The Old-time Ranches

— The Buck Long place; its delightful situation with reference to summer breeze. F.B. 36:151.

The North Wind

The sense of power, of destruction, of devastation was very great when this wind was in full force. It overmastered one and depressed the bodily functions. The order and normality of the countryside was overthrown. Trees were whipped, branches broken off; mills blown down, a raging dust cloud filled the sky as though all fiends were let loose upon us. No horse, fowl, bull, cat or dog but seemed different or acted differently. This is the flamina borealis of Avienus. cf. Harper's Latin Dict. 247.

Cont. from p. 85. with all this I was well content. And besides was the barn for play, the walnut grove, the vineyard, the fruit orchard and the fig trees — so much for interest and diversion. And yet in memory is engraved forever the picture of the two village lads playing ball in the clean level space under the trees at the end of the little street.

Geology.

– "The Geology of the Potrero Hills and Vacaville region, Solano Co., California" by Thos. L. Bailey (Univ. Cal. Publ. Geol. vol. 19: no. 15.).

The College Bell.

The California Baptist College had a library of classical books – the Greek, Latin and English classics mainly. Its books were characteristic of those found in the old-time classical college. Hotels in that early day might have a library, the What Cheer House in San Francisco had one in gold days. When the What Cheer House closed, its library went to the California Baptist College, as the library stamps on the books plainly indicate.

The Brush-Covered Vaca Mts.

This range undoubtedly carried at one time more forest trees than at present. There are vestiges of the ancient forest which doubtless was similar in some respects to the forest – the open woodland of the Napa Range. The vestiges demonstrate that: Arbutus menziesii near the   School, summit of the Vaca Mts., opposite head of Weldon Cañon; Torreya californica, vestiges in Gates Cañon; Quercus chrysolepis, somewhat common on west slope of the range near summit; Arctostaphylos manzanita, above head of Weldon Cañon. cf. F.B. 10:8. Also 53:193.

Cont. from p. 86. pleasant to live in the village, to be a boy in the village and always have some boy to play with. This thought went through my mind. But, then again, there was my riding horse, and scarcely a boy in the village had a riding horse, and all the animals on the ranch that interested me so much, bulls, cows, calves, chickens, turkeys, ducks, geese, sheep, pigs and all the horses known by name – with all this (Cont. p. 83)

The Village.

- The Blacksmith. Shrinking a tire on to a wagon wheel.
- The drug store and its aromas.
- The village forum. Presidential campaigns.

—When a very small lad, I liked to go with my father on trips to the village. Sometimes though, the day palled and waiting grew tiresome. I wandered to the end of the village business street and stood a bit at the corner by the Wilson House. Down the side street, at its further end, all shaded by tall trees and beneath the trees the grain fields stretch away to the hills, there at the street end two lads about my own age played ball, shouting aloud to each other as the ball went to and fro. The scene warmed my heart and left an happy unimperishable imprint. Thought I, how (Cont. p.85)

Wild Animals

- Jack Rabbits. U.S. Div. Ornithology and Mammalogy, Bull 8. (T. S. Palmer).
- Tule Elk. Cervus nannodes. cf. Academy News Letter, no. 57, Sept., 1944.

- The old Spanish Trail to Sonoma and Vallejo. — cf. my article in Vacaville Pronings.

Trips across Country

It was common, when we wished to go anywhere, to drive. One of our driving trips was to Berryessa Valley whither we went to pass the night with Abraham Clark and family. The Berryessa Valley then consisted of very large and very fine-looking grain ranches. The ranchers had built for themselves large good-looking homes and lived well. One of these fine places was that of Abe Clark. A rather fine looking genial man, now sixty-five or thereabouts. Although he had accumulated much wealth, he had had no formal education and could not write. Nor could he read as I remember. Mother, sister Frankie? and I made the trip on May 1, 1884.

? alive then?

— On several occasions, our cross-country trips took us through Napa Valley. It was the choicest of all drives for us. We never wearied of it. For many years too I botanized in the valley and had many friends there. But now I no longer have much touch with what happens in that some loveliest of surroundings — the valley floor about St. Helena.   See an allusion to this valley in my letter to Adeline Frederick re. the Montesol Ranch celebration.*

— Driving horses. The driver sat on the right-hand side of the wagon; the brake was on that side and the right leg is the most useful for controling the brake. My father always spoke of the "near" horse; put 'Cuba, he would say, on the near side; just as in Missouri he had said, "the near ox". All this is opposed to "off", the animal on the right side.

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Books

— Books were scarce and one read everything. There were certain boy's story books which I read in which virtue was always rewarded, the boy never failed to come to great things and always because he never lied, cheated or stole and so on. Such books, the goody goody kind, did not appeal to me much, there was about them too much of self-righteousness or prigishness. I believed in a straight life but not in talking about it. It is significant that I did not remember the name of the author of these books but came to a knowledge of him only in recent years, — the famous Horatio Alger! Speaking generally too: As a boy I did not remember the names of authors whose books were no good, even if I remembered the book itself.

— cf. my trip to the Rockville Church in "Men and Manners, vol. 13, p. 300. On that occasion I purchased a copy of "Our Methodist Pioneers" by Margaret W. Johnson, which tells of some old-time preachers in Vaca Valley and Suisun Valley.

See fuller account of this trip to Rockville in Jepson Correspondence, letter to Vacaville Reporter, dated Sept. 8, 1940.

British Stock

The following are the family names of land-holders in Suisun Valley as taken from the Supervisors' map of Solano Co., 1872. Pangburn, Pierce, Baker, Barbor, Sheldon, Harper, Boynton, Abernathy, Hails, Lambert, Wolfskill, Long, Lincoln, Clayton, Henderson, Swan, McCrary, Ramsey, Turner. I add: Blake, Peabody, Scarlett.

— One of the early day preachers in California was J. A. Benton, of the "First Church of Christ" in Sacramento. He was the author of "The California Pilgrim", printed in Sacramento in 1853. It is my remembrance, from relations by my elders, that he was one of the evangelists who came to Vaca Valley in early days for camp meetings or revivals.

— Campbellites. cf. Barton Warren Stone, Dict. Am. Biog. 18:71, who was a "Christian" as opposed to the "Disciples of Christ" (Campbellites). cf. biography of Alexander Campbell, the founder, in Dict. Am. Biog.

— In an English village, the dead are buried in the churchyard. In the very early days of the village, the graveyard was put alongside the college in which was the chapel — that is, it was placed across the street west from the college.

The Black Gnats.

The black gnats come in haying time usually, the latter half of May and early June. Usually they were gone by apricot time. They are an awful nuisance – they get into one's ears, around one's eyes and bite like anything. When I was about 8 years old, myself and Connie Van Meter had to carry fire wood a short distance. My armful of sticks prevented use of my hands to fight the biting gnats but I stood it for the fifty feet, dropped the wood and then smashed gnats. Connie could not stand it so short a distance but dropped his armful, scratched for gnats and then picked up his sticks again. The sympathies of the women were with Connie.

Fire

– At least 10,000 quail perished in the grass fires in nw. Yolo and sw. Colusa. See clipping from Vacaville Reporter, about July, 1936.

Boy's ears. – A boy always regards his ears as purely personal property. Strongly prejudiced in this matter he resents unnecessary references to them, especially as being dirty. What could be a more unpleasant remark than one coming from a big sister something like this: "Just look at your ears"! That merely shows how utterly unreasonable grown-ups can be. How *can* a boy look at his (Cont. p. 94.

Books

"Reading must bear not only the blossom of delight but the fruits of absorbed and assimilated experience, so that, when called to supreme action, each may act as a man of thought!" – Sir Ronald Storrs, in London Times Literary Supplem. 40 : 329 (July 12, 1941).

Chaparral

– The Chaparral of the Coast Range.
U. C. Mag. vol. 2, p. 98 (1896), by
W. L. Jepson.

– Cont from p. 93 (Boy's ears). ears? Indeed nature kindly disposed his ears where she did so that a boy would not have to bother about his ears. A boy wishes his ears let alone. He resents strongly any one else washing them. It is really insulting. No mule can abide any familiarities (cont p. 129.)

Sunsets

Rarely came wonderful sunsets, mostly in summer or autumn, when the whole western sky would be ablaze with flaming color. Such a uniform dispersal of flame was both stately and simple. Again there would be heaped masses of fluffy clouds, their tops mastered by the magic of coloration, with long horizontal lines of tiny coral islands stretching south just above the tops of the mountains.

The Domestic Animals.

The turkey flock! How much these birds added to the life of the ranch! Their full guttural cries or gobblings enlivened greatly the animal area about the barns. And it was never other than a pleasing sight to see the short strutting run of the tom turkeys – the hen turkeys ordinarily utterly indifferent to all these elaborate and pretentious parades.

As to origin of word turkey see Encyclopedia Brittanica, vol. 27.

– Royds, T. F. The Beasts, Birds and Bees of Virgil. A Naturalists Handbook to the Georgics. Ed. 2. Oxford. 1918.

– The House. The common room of the house was called the sitting room. In the early years, when hours of work ran from daylight to dark, the great luxury was to sit. When the sitting room was reached you dropped into a chair. The sitting room was more a place of rest than anything.

The Mule

— cf. F. B. 5 : 33, 39, re Hot Haste.

— cf. F. B. 4 : 95 (The mule Sierra and the Sierran axis).

— The Overland Mail at Laramie in 1851. L. R. Hafen, The Overland Mail, p. 58.

— ?? Mark Twain, Roughing it.

— Encycl. Britt. 18 : 959.

— Pim, Bedford, Gate of the Pacific, p. 280
Lord, J. K., Naturalist in British Columbia 2 : 115.
See extracts of these two in West American Botanical Exploration notebook. ? OR in Tykes & Gray Cat?

— A mule trade. cf. H. L. Harvey in Atlantic Monthly, p. 718. About 1927 but possibly years later or earlier. See extract in special pamphlet box, library room.

— Mules and Men. Z. N. Hurston.
See extract in Mules cover, Berkeley Hills.

— Men & Manners. 11 : 81.

— Ferris, W. A., Life in the Rocky Mts., pp. 9, 16, 21. See also index.

— Shirley Letters, p. 233.

— Francois Rabelais, Works, 5 : 92.

— Solomon goes to be crowned: The King also said unto them: Take with you the servants of your lord, and cause Solomon my son to ride upon mine own mule, and bring him down to Gihon.

— Be ye not as the horse or as the mule which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit or bridle, lest they come near unto thee. — Psalms 32. 9.

— And Ahab said unto Obidiah, Go into the land, unto all the fountains of water, and unto all brooks: peradventure we may find grass to save the horses and mules alive, that we lose not all the beasts. — 2 Kings 18. 5.

— Manly: Death Valley. Mules seek out all succulent herbage.

— See my address before the Sierra Club, Fiftieth Anniversary, December, 1942. In "Without the Gates File". (You cannot push a mule off the Golden Gate Bridge!)

The Coyote

- cf. Cal. Ranger, vol. 7, no. 14. (2-28-1936) "Coyotes & Mustard".
- The Commonwealth, vol. 12, p. 272 (May 12, 1936)
- Cal. Ranger, vol. 7, no. 31 (1936). Coyotes in L. Cal.
- Wolf and Coyote Trapping, by A. R. Harding. p. 27, et seq.
- Men and Manners, 11: 50
- cf. index, Biology Library, titles sub Vernon Bailey.
- Dedication note to Coyote. F. B. 31: (152.
- cf. index to "Old-time days in Vaca Valley".
- Grinnell, Dixon and Linsdale, Fur-bearing Mammals of California. 2 vols.
- Plan of the play in University grounds, in Strawberry Cañon. For the opening conversation cf. Men and Manners, vol. 11, p. 47. cf. also indices to all notebooks.

Ulatis School.

— The school ground was a grand place. A boy was as free as the air, as unrestrained as a blue jay. There were no home duties, no chores, no work. It was elysium, the playfield of the Republic.

A Spring Day at Little Oak.

cf. Men and Manners, 14:112.

Winter at Little Oak.

— Sierra Nevada — a traveler might not know they were there, so much do they look like clouds on the far horizon. Trees in winter: Buckeyes change; Cottonwoods have another character; the oaks now show well their architecture.

(Cont. from p. 101.) incredible slowness along the way to its destination "down-town". Nate Holt was the drayman for long — and I think his father before him, but of that I am uncertain. At any rate Nate was a feature of the village life, all during my early boyhood, say 1875 to 1890 he was drayman. — July 10, 1941.

Bible Verses.

For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land. The fig tree putteth forth her green figs and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. — Solomon's Song, 2: 11-13.

The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. — Psalms, 92:12.

And we will cut wood out of Lebanon, as much as thou shalt need: and we will bring it to thee in flotes by the sea to Joppa; and thou shalt carry it up to Jerusalem. — 2 Chron. 2:16.

Old-time Characters in the Village.

— The mail and express were taken from the railway station down to the village main street on a dray. This dray was a two wheeled affair consisting of a platform laid on the axle, the platform sloping backward an downward nearly to the ground. It was so built in order that heavy barrels and boxes could be rolled on to it from behind. It was drawn by one stout draft horse harnessed between the shafts. When the dray was heavily loaded behind, the shafts tended to go skyward, with the horse, in its heavy harness, as if pulling down on them. The drayman sat on the front part of the platform and the dray proceeded with

[Cont. p. 99.]

The Country School.

Our school stood on the wide plain — lone and treeless. It was a plain one story one-room building, — utterly simple and unpretentious — but to me it, and all about it was a realm of keen delight and never-ending interest. Here one met, associated, played with other boys. Above all was the play. One could get to school quite early and have much time for play; then one looked forward eagerly to little recess 10:40–11.00. Then there was big recess, 12:00–1:00 and afternoon little recess 2:40–3:00.

One day it was storming so heavily as to make certain there would be no school. But I went anyway, counting on some other adventurous spirit to keep the faith. When I got near the school a voice in declamation could easily be heard and I wondered could school have begun early. I listened: "Hear ye yon lion in his den. Tis three

days since he tasted food". When I got into the school room a lone boy was there, about my own age, practicing declamation from the rostrum to the empty desks. He went on and finished. He was a lad of quite serious purpose. Finding that there would obviously be no school, he meant that his journey of several miles across the watery and muddy plain should not be wasted. As soon as he finished the great speech of the Roman gladiator, he said that he was going home. My attempts to prevail upon him to play were in vain — there was work at home that he must do and off he went conscientiously. Left alone, perforce I returned home too, though there was no work awaiting me. I have not the slightest remembrance of this lad's name. As I remember he was in the school only one term; but after all these years there remains the vivid picture of the young lad, his head erect, his eyes shining, his face glowing, as he vigorously intoned the thrilling words addressed by Spartacus to the gladiators*. – Jan. 6. 1933.

"Spartacus to the Gladiators" was written by Elijah Kellogg, a New Englander. He also wrote other school boy declamations: "Pericles to the People", "Hannibal at the Altar" and "Regulus to the Carthaginians". He also wrote juvenile stories; "Lion Ben", "Young Ship Builders of Elm Island", "Sophomores of Radcliffe" and some others. [See Kellogg's biog. in Dict. Am. Biog.]

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* It would be pleasant to remember his name but it could not now be recovered. Even after more than a half century the picture of him standing there on the teacher's rostrum rests pleasantly in memory. Serious yet eager, steady yet forceful, good-humored and a fine comrade – I have now only that one incident to remember him by.

– Precocious children.

"The intelligence of superior pupils, as measured by the Stanford-Binet test, drops substantially during a period of five or more years, and girls lose more than boys. – Graduate School of Education in Harvard University. (Science, News Note, Feb. 2, 1934.

– The Schooling in Speech. of. Men and Manners, vol. 6, p. 188. Referring to what is said there: Of course I have never noticed my own speech as having any particular quality; but I am certain that it is the early training that counted.

– The arts of children. Leila Williams and the new pupil at the school. A new girl came to school one day, Carrie Roberts. She was or was thought to be rather more than the ordinary accession to the school, at least by my cousin Leila and as Leila took her in charge completely, entertaining her at recess at "little recess", monopolizing her completely, at "big recess", taking her apart to eat the noonday lunch. Frequently Leila would take Carrie into the wheat field across the road from the school, a field rented by her father and therefore over which Leila claimed suzerainity as against the other children. Leila assumed headship of the school for the girls, and assuming headship it was therefore her trust and duty to act as hostess to the new girl, to show her from the start that she (Leila) *was* the one important girl in the school. So they became very "thick", "too thick" said some of the other children. Such intense (Cont. p. 138).

— Small boy rhyme for the open:

"Oh, come along, oh come along,
Scolding doesn't hurt,
Whipping doesn't last,
And killing they dasen't, killing they dasen't."

cf. Jepson Field Book, vol. 37, p. 24.

Cont. from p. 45.

The Wheat Field

held aloft each a single head the height of a ~~small~~ lad of twelve, or a bit more. At that level the eye ranged the lusty heads in endless ranks across the wide plain of the wheat field. When the trades blew it was the breath of the trades, the wind, that was dominant; but on quiet hot days, breathless and still, there was a cleanness of air in the grain, only faintly suggestive or prophetic of the aroma that, in harvest time prevailed over the threshing floors or "settings".

— Poems on wheat or corn: Thos. Carlyle.
"Corn", by Sidney Lanier.

— Cato. Roman Farm Management.

— In the fall the great bands of hogs — several hundred animals — were driven across the plain to the main railway line and marketed. It was necessary to drive them in the early morning and we started about three o'clock. These early morning hours on the wide plain, the western range of hills lying low as we journeyed eastward, so that all above us and about was the sky - starry, clean-drawn and sparkling. The great heavens always seemed brighter and more wonderful in these mornings than the evening sky. Sometimes I would be attracted by luminous bands in the sky - distinct zones of light, as if occasional in character. In after years I learned that they were due or said to be due to the phosphorescence caused by the breaking up of comets into fine dust.

Valley Smoke

"Pleasant the breath of the valley wheat,
Pleasant the valley oak,
The valley marsh is bitter-sweet,
But not the valley smoke!"—
Derrick N. Lehmer.

"For who loves me must have a touch of earth;
The low sun makes the color."—
Tennyson, Idylls of the King, p. 304.

Berryessa Valley

One day we went on an excursion to Berryessa Valley. Up through Vaca Valley we traveled, through Pleasants Valley and thence across Putah Creek by the ford, and then through Putah Pass by the Devil's Gate. At last we came into Berryessa Valley, its wide expanse of floor very level and glorified with extensive groves of the noble Valley Oak. These trees in their variety of architecture and grandeur of stature never ceased to win allegiance from my admiring eyes.

We were bound to the ranch of Abraham Clark, a principality on the west side of the valley where he and his family lived in a large well-built mansion with many outbuildings, the whole partaking of a somewhat feudal character in its remoteness

- Cont. p. 115 -

Eucalyptus

There was a "Blue Gum Epidemic" in planting Eucalyptus globulus in the late seventies and early eighties. The Wilson grove, just south of Little Oak ½ mile, was planted in 1877, says Lee Wilson, whose family moved there in 1876. Our grove was probably planted the same year or maybe 1876. It was a considerable grove by 1880 and sheltered the croquet ground.

I never liked the groves. They dry up wells and springs; they are very untidy, sending down a perpetual litter of bark and leaves; they are a fire menace. Frank Williams planted three groves in elbows of the Alamo about 1876. The middle one caught fire in summer in 1931 or 1932 and scattered fire over the Hiatt orchard to the Hawkins ranch about 1/3 mile away or more, causing a

field fire which had to be paid for by the present owners of the Williams ranch. Untidy Eucalyptus is commented on by Charles Darwin in the Naturalist's Voyage, p. 417 (Everyman's Library).

– During the week of Dec. 5–11, 1932, Monday to Sunday, the temperatures progressively fell lower culminating in the great freeze of Sunday, Dec. 11. I was in Vaca Valley during that week. My Japanese pruners at Little Oak worked in the orchard through the week in spite of the terrible cold. It seemed as if my body, faced by the terrible north wind, had never known such bitter cold, striking through me like daggers. On Feb. 17, 1933, I went again to Little Oak from Berkeley. The Eucalyptus groves at Little Oak and throughout the countryside are white from the great freeze! Some say the trees will die, some say they will sprout. In Glenn Co. and Tehama Co. the groves are terribly injured. L. W. Wigmore of the Orland Register says that experts in his county say, that if the trees were cut down, preventing downward movement of the sour sap, crown-sprouting would take place. — Feb-25, 1933. cf. fuller account in F.O. 53:109.

The Home Landscape.

Every place, every spot had the deepest interest for me — every hill, every bend of the creek, every clump of trees, even the cross-roads corners had each some association or place in the memory. Everything observed and studied as a child became magnified. A tiny outcropping ledge of rocks on the low slope near Captain T. B. Chinn's place was called Chinn's Bluff. Years later, when I became grown, it had shrunken to nothing

— Cont. p. 121.

The Flood Years.

"The fold stands *empty* in the drowned field."
— Midsummer Nights Dream.

Well I remember the wet years in the seventies and eighties when the Sacramento Valley was almost like a lake! Water, water everywhere! The problem was to get rid of the water in the neighborhood of Little Oak. Great pools or ponds formed in all low or semi-low spots. And as the winter wore on into March the water continued to run in the swales, and ditches. Down the road in front of the house at Little Oak, the water ran in a clear stream for weeks and weeks. The road was then a fine playground for two little lads — a place to build canals and dams.

The Dry Years

The drought of 1864 is referred to in Dict. Am. Biog. 17: 541. Referred to merely.

The Orchard Trees.

Figs, Mission. cf. Vancouver and other early writers who saw them at the missions. Their crops. Very large trees at old Pena Adobe and at Thurber ranch. cf. Ira J. Condit, Fig Culture in Cal. (Cal. Agr. Extension Service, Circ. 77. 1941).

Cont. from p. 109

and self-sustaining character. The owner of the ranch sustained this idea: a large fine-looking type of man who could govern his domain in a lordly way. Note, too, — (in carrying out the idea) — that he could not read or write!

He had a daughter Alice (who married a wastrel, Geo. McKenzie); a son Reuben who later and perhaps now lives in Ventura; and a one-armed son Alonzo who lived on the adjoining ranch above his father. The Abe Clark place, after the death of the original owner, passed into the possession of Senator James D. Phelan of San Francisco, who doubtless had a mortgage on it. In the spring of 1934 my attention was called to a newspaper notice saying that —— Clark,

— Cont. p. 117. —

The Drouth Years

As a lad I well remember the anxiety for rain as the winter wore on, an anxiety that deepened into alarm. The neighbors, meeting each other on the roads, talked of nothing else. In the village the talk always came to that. Everywhere stretched the dry fields, the brown parched hills now forbidding and hopeless as they lay on the valley's edge. And there was always, the heart-sick sound, the lowing of hungry cattle, now faint, now irregular, at times rising to a pleading chorus flung on the empty air.

Cattle Brands.

- cf. first brand in Solano County, June, 1940, issue of Pacific Stockman.
- Sidney Walker's brand was "SID", acc. Max Brazelton, Nov. 19, 1940.

– Cont. from p. 115. –

(his given name I have forgotten) had come into possession of the Phelan ranch (on which he had been living). My cousin Nora Gray says that this Clark is one of Alonzo's sons. She says further that "Alonzo and his wife made good" and paid off their home. "Alonzo's family were the only ones of the whole family that had learned the true value of money and how to use it wisely." – Jan. 17, 1935.

– New Englanders. Two women, traveling, and of course by wagon, came to the house and asked for food, for a meal. My mother went to the kitchen to prepare some refreshments. In the sitting room they surveyed the furniture and everything in the room and expressed themselves freely by sneering remarks about Missourians. I was so small, they ignored my presence but young as I was I was stirred to deep hatred of them because of their attitude towards my mother. Disregarding me that I had no eyes to see, ears to hear.

The Summer Heat.

I arrived at Little Oak from Berkeley about 12:30, Aug 11, '33. It seemed unusually hot. A little hot trade blew in the afternoon. The night was hot. The next day it was 110 in Vaca Valley at Brazelton's ranch. The trades flew in the after-noon but very hot. Before 6:00 the air went quiet and the firm heavy hush of the great heat held the land with a stillness that was not of weakness, but of a giant drowsed in deepest sleep. This morning, Sunday, Aug. 13, 1933, the air still or with only a passing breath. Yesterday and the day before the deep blue sky holds not a cloud - not a fleck, but on the far eastern horizon the summer thunder clouds are piled in billows for two hundred miles along the Sierras with a deep blue but narrow band

between the clouds and the wide stretch of the valley floor.

The air is so hot, the sun so fierce that iron tools cannot be held in the hands. Larks come palpitating out of the fields to the water hole. The glare of the whitened hills is painful at high noon. Insects, birds and animals are inarticulate - they have gone into the voiceless hibernation of the heat.

Monday was much a like day, the trades blowing in the afternoon a normal breeze, the night calm, still, hushed. Tuesday the afternoon trade was a bit higher. Instead of falling at sunset it went on, and then began to increase becoming a high gale by 7:30 and continuing all night. It brought down large limbs from the walnut and fig trees. Although so high a wind directly off the ocean, it was a hot warm wind all night, not becoming cool even toward morning. So I have on this trip slept, at Little Oak, without bed cover every night. It is the rule, ordinarily, that the trades become cool in the night or the late night, sometimes quite chilly. In this instance the ground has become hot for so long that the winds are heated, even though coming off ocean fog banks.

The next morning after the hard blow of Tuesday night the sky was rather heavily overcast with clouds. — Wed., Aug. 16, 1933.

This morning I drove early from Berkeley to Vaca Valley. It had rained a little the night before in Berkeley, the sky was heavily overcast, with a high wind. The lowering clouds betokened a heavy storm even though it was June 14. However, I went anyway. When I got into Suisun Valley the white-grass hills of summer time gave back to the whole country side a strange almost uncanny atmosphere — all

the way to Pigeon Point they looked pallid white- as if some uncanny or deathly spirit were abroad in the atmosphere. Here one had an unusual combination of tones and colors due to the heavy blackness of the sky so unusual at this season in combination with the earth-glare of mid-summer. The normal is the dazzling metallic whiteness of summer heat. —
Sunday, June 14, 1936.

"Noon stands overhead", — Donald Culross Peattie, At. 159: 189.
Atlantic Mo.

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cont. from p. 112 —

or nearly, and yet on this tiny rift of rocks, steep for a few feet, there is shelter on this northeast-facing slope for some ferns and other plants that could never endure the temperature of the open plain. I loved to give names to things. To All the fine Cottonwood Trees in the Alamo Creek bottom above the home place I gave names. — It added enormously to the interest of my little home land.

The Foothills

As I drive south from the town towards Hawkins ranch and approach the Arequipa Hills the glamour of there whitened slopes and canons dotted with the dark figures of the oaks and interspersed with buckeye stirs happy feelings of a beloved area. At a distance so little impression, yet close at hand they acquire a dignity of their own that is apart from height or grandeur, an impressiveness that is associated with their ancient geological lineage and the slow but sure forces that have brought about their peculiar beauty. — Aug. 17, 1933.
but quiet

— The small native life, both plant and animal, has disappeared very largely from the valley level and the foothills.

There is no longer cover for the small animals — fire, grazing or cultivation having changed the conditions.

— The lure of the foothills. cf. F.B. 7:162. cf. Men and Manners, 14:134.

The Vaca Mts.

— A day's pilgrimage. cf. letter of M. Sharpe, May 18, 1937, in Jepson Correspondence.

— The Parry Manzanita. Arctostaphylos manzanita. Its relation to certain soil areas: U.S. Dept. Agr. Series 1927. Bull. no. 13. A Soil Survey of the Clear Lake Area. Carpenter, E. J., et al. (note taken from American Journal of Botany, vol. 27, p. 190.

— The Sleepy Hills = The Arequipa Hills.

— No baser vision
Their spirit fills
Who walk by night
On the naked hills. — Edward Lewis

This Business of Staring

As children we were told not to stare; it was held an unpardonable sin or almost. Don't act, says my mother, as if you had never seen anybody. Now as a fact we children had never seen anybody and there is nothing we loved more to do than just to stare, to stare for one's hearts content, to stare unaffectedly and continuously, to stare without interruption and without distraction, to stare without anyone around, any grown-up to say "Don't stare", or what was worse "quit staring" just when one had found a perfectly fine objective for staring. To be sure there was some chance to stare in church – but church-goers had by this become dull and uninteresting – Grandpa Scoggins was quite a

(cont. p. 182)

The Blue Gum Epidemic

In the late seventies every one that could planted Blue Gum seedlings – everywhere over the country – especially on poor lands. There was not much planting in the upper valley. The Williams grove (see p. 110 ante) which caught fire in the summer, made, says Frank Dickie, a column of fire half-a-mile high. Probably the flames did not go more than 1/4 mile high, but doubtless it was a fire-column a half-mile high. The day was calm and the air rushed in equally from every side. The litter, thinks Dickie, had never been cleared out in his memory and possibly not for forty years. The trees themselves were near 100 feet high and the conditions of summer dryness were just right for a real bonfire. Fire was scattered on neighbor's fields one-half-mile away or nearly.

The great frost of Dec. 11, 1932, injured or branch-killed the Eucalypti so badly throughout the Sacramento Valley and everywhere that the architecture of the trees has been completely changed. The trunks and main limbs feathered out in new growth. So, the Eucalyptus groves will never again look quite the same.

The early day planting quite changed the landscape of the barren plains in Solano Co., — all the plains country stretching east from Elmira and Cannon wears an entirely different aspect. Because over that great plain in the old days nothing broke the vision, nothing disturbed the uniform flow of the vast level.

Tule Fog.

I have just come to Vaca Valley and to Little Oak. The whole Sacramento Valley is filled with tule fog — lying low on the land, obscuring the sun day after day, covering everything with moisture or dripping wetness — bleak, chill and comfortless. There is little or no air-movement and all nature seems stalled, desolate and hopeless.

Frank Dickie says that somewhere back in 1892 or thereabouts the tule fog one winter lasted for six weeks at a stretch. — Dec. 26, 1933.

I noticed, see above, that the flock of blackbirds were about Little Oak as usual, making curious sweeps in the gray fog as they went busily on to their feeding grounds.

Tule Fog.

– For two weeks, or more, heavy high-menacing banks of tule fog lower on the ridge of the Berkeley Hills this January, flooding over a bit as driven by the wind like water. By this token I know there is tule fog in the Great Valley, by the token, too, that the valley of San Francisco Bay remains clear – although when the North Wind is high, banks of it are driven south over the Santa Cruz ridge, banks pour through the gap of Carquinez Straits to the Mt. Tamalpais ridges. My teaching assistant, Mr. L. Constance, coming by train from Oregon said there was no fog in the upper Sacramento Valley (about Jan. 16); but a later report from Tracy says three weeks tule fog. It covers the delta region and adjoining land. – Jan. 25, 1934.

The Tiny Villages.

– Frank Dickie says that he was born at Gangtown, 4 or 5 miles south of Denverton – a place consisting of a blacksmith shop, a house or two, and a church. He was born in 1871.

– Binghamton was probably in existence before the arrival of the railroad in Solano County. Yes – because the "armory" was built in Civil War days.

– Batavia, a little hamlet with a country store, a station on the railway; a blacksmith shop; perhaps in the old days a post office.

– Rockville, a few dwellings, a school, a church.

– Denverton, a store, a blacksmith shop.

– Silveyville.

– Cont. from p. 94. with his ears. And a mule is a highly intelligent animal. A boy does not wish his ears bothered! Ergo, a boy is a highly intelligent animal.

To Dunns Peak a-Botanizing.

One day, it was on a Monday, Ralph Platt and I, left the Academy early (it was a private school, with the high sounding title, California Normal and Scientific School), bound on a field trip to Dunn's Peak. We rode my lazy riding pony Princess, but by dint of a lot of persuading from Ralph who rode behind me the distance from the town was covered in a remarkably short time. Carrying our botany collecting boxes, Ralph's large one, my small one, we hurried through the orchards covering the plateau above the Ulatis to the point which rises abruptly from the valley level and makes a somewhat bold bluff, Dunn's Peak, at the middle of the valley on the east side. The bluff at its summit carried a thin fringe of native

trees and its sides sloping sharply down to the bed of the Ulatis were too steep to be cultivated, or even harried very closely either by grazing animals. So here the native plants had persisted and were in full bloom. What a glorious sight! Here for the first time I saw the scarlet racemes of Pentstemon centranthifolius, the lovely azure blue of Pentstemon heterophyllus, the curious dark color of the Purple Milkweed, Gomphocarpus cordifolius as it was then called. What a fine place it was — so clean and sweet, with all the dry aroma of May-time filling the air. The specimens gathered on that happy afternoon I have still. So, after loading up and climbing over all the bluff face we started homeward, the pony more willing to hasten towards hay and barley. Since then I have botanized on some of the grandest peaks of the earth— but none have given me more pleasure, more intaking joy than the sun-lit hours on the slopes of little Dunn's Peak in Vaca Valley.— Feb. 3, 1934.

Dunn's Peak was also called by the unpoetic name of Smith's Bluff. Indeed that was the name at the time of our botany trip. When I listed the place names for the Vaca Valley region on behalf of the National Geographic Board, the name Dunn I had from Ralph Platt. He (Dunn) was an old settler but what more I cannot now recall. I think a surveyor.

The Locust Tree.

The Locust Tree was planted as a shade tree by the early settlers. It is a sign of an old-time place, that is homestead. It would grow well in almost any type of soil, even in the hard clays and adobes, and made an erect trunk and good sun-protecting crown that was grateful to the first dwellers in the land. With us at Little Oak it did not root-sprout, but after sixty or seventy years or more when the trees are becoming aged, apparently they are thicketing at some distance from the parent tree. Locust seeds are a food for the mourning dove and the valley quail.

In the Sierra foothills it was planted in all the early settlements, being one of the commonest planted trees. In nearly all mining villages the streets are old-time shaded by this trusty tree. There are fine old trees in the streets of Yreka.

Native plants

– Interesting to us lads botanically were the various kinds of Lotus of the springtime hills and valley floors. These plants were plainly, even to our untrained eyes, of one alliance, of one group – although plainly different – different in habit, or size or shade of flower or in hue. They made for us a study in what made a genus – a natural kind of grouping. We called them Hosackias – a name we had from, found in Rattan's Popular California Flora. That name is now out of date; these plants are called Lotus – but the term Hosackia introduced me to a bit of early U. S. History. David Hosack was an M. D. of the early U. S in (Cont. p. 173)

The Native Trees

– cf. re The Valley Oak, the "College at the foot of the hill", p. 21.

– Valley Oak as posts. cf. F. B. 23: 139.

I myself as a child remember that there were fences (around grainfields) on ranches in our neighborhood that had oak posts. I think the Grandpa Hawkins ranch.

– I have recently turned up a letter in my old files from Rev. H. E. Jewett of Oiler Ranch in which he speaks about my suggestion to him that the extra Valley Oak seedlings along the Jewett lane be planted by the fence at intervals to save them and help reproduce the ancient beauty of the countryside. See Omissions File, Jepson Correspondence.

– cf. a reference to the Valley Oak, vol. 9, p. 161, of Men and Manners.

– Guy Earl, former regent of the University, told me, Dec. 1934, that fossil redwood had been brought up wells bored by him in the Suisun

– Cont. bottom p. 134 –

– Cont. from bottom p. 135. –

Marshes. The Redwood, if it is really there, is in a spot where one might naturally look for it. That is on the east side of the Napa Range where it exists today on the east slope of the range on Howell Mt. It may well have been in the Benicia Hills further south.

The Big Schoolboy Fight at School.

One day at the Academy word ran around that there was to be a big fight. The trouble was between Wirt Stice and George Morehouse. Why the matter was not fought out on the spot I do not know. Morehouse had a biting tongue and this was undoubtedly the root of the trouble. The school was then surrounded by a large cypress grove (Monterey Cypress) and in one of the openings between the trees to the northwest of the brick school all the boys of the school gathered. It was agreed that there should be rounds of so much time with one-minute intervals. Morehouse's second was Frank Platt, second for Stice was Everett Williams, my cousin. I was unanimously selected for umpire, or rather referee.

Ralph Platt had been proposed for umpire by Morehouse, but objected to by the opposition strongly. However, I declined positively to serve. I was on good terms with Morehouse and Wirt Stice was an old-time schoolmate*. So nothing was left but for Ralph Platt to be umpire.

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* I think that he had been at Center School with me. — Yes! he said so in 1940!

[Cont. from p. 106] courting could not last forever. One day Carrie attempted to, did talk in a very friendly way with another girl. The matter got to a point where Leila interfered and a quarrel followed. The thick friendship was instantly broken and the two did not even speak to each other for some days.

Carrie Roberts was the daughter of an English family that had moved into our neighborhood, occupying the old "Kit" Williams place.

Marble Time

Marbles usually began after the first rains. There was a ring in which each boy placed as many marbles, and shot at them with a "taw". As long as he knocked a marble out of the

ring he could keep on shooting. As I remember his taw did not become "dead" by remaining in the ring, but had to remain where it finally rested in the ring when his turn ended. If it stopped in the ring, he could exchange his taw for an ordinary marble.

Then there was a game by which one played from hole to hole in the ground, but the details of this have now gone from me.

The new marbles as they came from the store were ringed with narrow rings of bright and wonderful colors that gave me a fine thrill just to look at them.

There is an article on marbles in Encyclopaedia Brittanica, vol. 17, p. 679, 11th ed. — May 26, 1934.

Cont. from p. 9 at *

This book was about real bears, live bears — bears that stood on their hind feet and growled so, oh, just terrible, and then put their feet down and came running after you; and it was no use for you to run because a bear could run faster than most any horse. Why, the book just took your breath away. And it was true — all true, because there were the Sierra Nevadas that had the bears in them, one could see them far distant on the world's edge of the great plain, but still lying there, mysterious and snow-covered, so remote and far-away, but still all-powerful in their cloud-capped majesty.

The book appealed to us in every way. The Grizzly was the most important wild animal in the state. His courage was of the most stupendous

kind, and yet he was a dignified beast. He was commonly indifferent to man unless interfered with — but then look out! Nothing might save you. This sort of behavior appealed strongly to our small boy sense of conduct and fair play.

The story of the Grizzly Bear was the greatest prize most of us had ever known in the way of a book. Most of us were starved for books — at least this sort of books. For utter lack of anything else I turned over the pages of the great dry books at home but little did they feed me at that time. My father at Christmas had bought a present for my elder sister Frances, a copy of Milton's Paradise Lost. Well I remember her, a young girl of thirteen, sitting in an arm chair by the fire, reading the pages of the great epic. I was expected to read Milton**, too, but I did not. Three decades passed before the Paradise Lost filled a real need with me. As a young lad my craving was for action of a kind that I could understand and ~~Adam's~~ Grizzly Bear book ~~filled~~ crowded my mind with thrills such as I had never known before. — Oct. 1934

** See p. 152.

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* from p. 10.

This repressed excitement in the ~~school~~ amongst the boys at once got the attention of the teacher, Miss Mary Elliot, a good teacher, a just and forceful woman, but a severe disciplinarian. It absorbed her attention for many hours and then more or less irritated her as she could make nothing of it. One of our school mates was Will Eliot, a young brother of the teacher. mischievous, full of fun, none too

industrious, he was very likely to be whipped as an example to the school. So on this occasion, failing to comprehend the surcharged atmosphere, for some insignificant, some trifling cause, Will was called up and whipped before the school. Will took his seat resentful. Whipping, no matter who was involved, all of us regarded seriously, but this time we thought it a bit of fun that Will should suffer vicariously for the rest of us and our lack of sober conduct nearly got all into trouble. — Oct., 1934.

Wind

There are few things in Berkeley, where I have lived all my life since manhood, to remind me of Vada Valley. One of these is the North Wind in winter. It is now blowing strong and blowing bitter cold — a wind of a great violence — stirring in the mind, a dread a sense of uneasiness and impending disaster or dire events. The fierce cold and the tempestuous raging of the wind broke on the countryside in depths of winter when aged or mortally ill people passed away. So the wind seemed a symbol of mourning and of trouble, — a harbinger of death. — Dec. 14, 1940. Cont. p. 160.

Persistence of the native flora

— The Dickie field, opposite the front gate at Little Oak, is now full of flowering Eschscholtzia californica, although the land had been cut close with the mower for hay. Asclepias mexicana is in the orchard at Little Oak, in spots cultivated seventy years. Grindelia camporum persists only along the uncultivated lanes. — June, 1934.

— Echinocystis fabacea flourishes along the east lane orchard fence. It is doubtless disseminated by squirrels.

Orchard Trees

— Fig. "Every man sitting under his own fig tree". Mentioned in Bible ↑Fig 43 times.

— The almond, like the fig, came to us from Mexico, with the Spanish missionaries. It is an ancient orchard tree since it goes back to the earliest times in the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates. Blossoming the first of the orchard trees it was a symbol of the coming of the spring. See Standard

— Cont. p. 176 —

Native Flora.

— cf. range of Whipplea. See note at bottom of page. See index in back.

— cf. F. B. 56:28.

— Each season had its own peculiar charm or its own interest. After the rains of November, December and January, the native plants began to flourish in the orchard, coming up in a rank lush growth that seemed to tell a strange story of curious mystery. A few flowered early. Red Maids put forth its brilliant carmine lips; the native clovers still had a place; in low wet places there were Nemophilas and Downingias; and the alien Shepherd's Purse kept company with the Tongue-grass of the same family in early flowering. There was about all this, in the way in which the bare brown earth, after the hard ways of winter was so soon covered with tender living things, there was something strange and yet ineffably, alluring, something far-away and eerie and yet friendly and lovely. At times even more than lovely. The Red Maids sometimes colonized the whole earth beneath the bare orchard trees and spread over the ground a sheet of crimson, which by contrast became entrancingly beautiful when the prune trees, tired of winter and not to be outdone by such, glorified the scene by mantling all (colors) their branches with millions of white petals.

— Native trees. cf. Vaca Mts. as to Redwood or Yellow Pine border plants, or as to coastal plants. — F. B. 53:193. ↑cf.

Vacaville Grammar School,
in my day the Ulatis Grammar School.

As a lad I knew at Center School no world but a world of Campbellites. With the petty school yard persecution I bore as best I could. A small lad in good health and with a lively spirit will become habituated to any situation and I did. It was ~~something~~ to be borne as best one could, like the heat of sun in mid-July, like the cold of the North Wind in January, and you thought nothing more about it. But how tolerant it made me! When I went to the Vacaville Grammar School, properly the Ulatis School, where there were no Campbellites, every boy seemed a likely fellow, a good playmate. I was so happy as to be not in the least critical. One of the boys I liked was Willie Davis. Handsome, confident, frank, quick and good-natured, his self-esteem and bossy ways I overlooked. But

not the other boys on the school ground, because boys are extremely discerning as to human nature. One day when Willie was passing along the village street, with that erect easy confident way which became him so well, a very prominent rancher, big of frame and impressive in manner, said to his companions, ranchers,—"That boy will some day be governor of California". News was scarce in that day and each man took the news home to his family. It quickly spread. The next ~~day~~ week, on the school ground, Willie's first attempt to boss things was greeted with a grand chorus: Governor! Governor! and thereafter on the school ground, ever, it was: Hello, Governor! How are you, Governor? He was a nice lad, but how could he become Governor with such a handicap as that. He didn't. He drove a milk wagon. — Oct. 1934.

The Old College Bell

— There is a brief history of the college in the first History of Solano Co. by

— The old college in the village undoubtedly gave an atmosphere to the valley, which has in some slight degree persisted after the college died. The college was a truly classical one, giving Greek, Latin, Philosophy and Mathematics. As to Latin in my own family, cf. p. 11 of "Common Names of California Plants", ms. notebook.

My sister Frances was a distinguished student in the old college. She had great capacity for study. Broken by some ailment she was taken by my father to Douglas Co., Ore. and was there in 1884, coming home to die shortly after.

The Game of Pile-On.

Whenever a wrestling bout started through some chance conflict between two boys on the playground an interested crowd of their playmates soon encircled the wrestlers and gave one or the other or both sundry and sometimes fierce words of hearty encouragement. As the struggle went on the interest became intense, until one boy mastered the other. But if the boy on top held to his triumph too long, then both boys lost, because the school immediately raised the high cry, "Pile on! pile on! pile on! Everywhere about the school yard the cry echoed, pile on! pile on! pile on! and stray boys came running, pile on! pile on! pile on! Everyone threw himself full-length on the wrestlers and others on these. Pile on! pile on! pile on! (Some danced backwards and then came running to get a high place on the mass of struggling boys. Even the littlest in the schools, who kept fearfully from the struggle at first, at last climbed joyfully on top of the melee. Pile-on! Pile on! Pile on! All had cried "pile on"! at first, big boy and little boy, To encourage others to 'jump on'! But now began shrieks from the bottom of the pile. Get off! Get off! Get off! Quit! You're killing me! I'm dying!* and similar calls of terror! And as the cry of "Pile on" died away and the tangled mass of legs and arms unwound and got free, the luckless lads at the bottom cried out on their tormentors, once the breath crushed out of them returned, and ruefully moaned the hardness of the mob of boys, their fellows. — Oct., 1934.

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*. Get off! Didn't you hear me? I tell you I am dying!! *Cont. p. 151.

Pattern of the Hills

I knew the hills, every ridge, every point, every cañon, — their contours etched by the background of blue sky, their bulk strengthened by clouds on by gray days. It seemed to me there was not one unfamiliar slope or gully — so lovingly had my eyes while on the roads studied every detail. And yet, traveling north, Mar. 8, '36, on the Denverton – Elmira road, when I turned west towards Little Oak, there on the horizon, showing through a gap (or swale) of the Araquipa Hills at the head of Osage Cañon, were the tops of Twin Sisters Peaks of the Napa Range beyond Suisun Valley! This is the only part of the Napa Range that can be seen from the Sacramento Valley floor. Curiously, I cannot recall ever noticing these striking points as a boy! And yet as a (Cont. p. 168)

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* cont. from p. 150. Big boy and little boy. Fat* boy and thin boy. Dobie boy and Alamo boy — all mixed up — hopelessly entangled.

* There was no fat boy in Center School.

— Milton meant more to us than the Paradise Lost. He stood for unbending resistance to kingly tyranny and royal licentiousness; he represented to us the symbol of the Puritan for clean living and high thinking. The arrogance of overlords was intolerable to us. But:

> "Shakespeare was of us
> Milton was for us,
> Burns, Shelley were with us —
> They watch from their graves!
> He alone breaks from the van and the freemen,
> He alone sinks to the rear and the slaves!"

It was known many years before there came before my eyes the scathing lines on Tennyson's acceptance of a lordship, lines attributed to Browning. — Nov. 1934.

The Country School.

"And those things do best please me
That befall preposterously." — Midsummer
Nights Dream, act. 3, Sc. 2, l. 120.

We had once a young teacher, rather new, his first school. A trustee died and one day Ben Ely put up a joke on the school teacher. Gene Marshall had played a joke on him by scaring his horse. Now Ben Ely didn't mind but he thought it would be a good joke to tell the teacher that Gene needed watching in school. So being just about quarter tipsy, one day he stopped at the school and called the teacher out on to the porch and announced to him that he had been appointed trustee in place of . Ben was just tipsy enough to act a pompous part and so he laid the law down to the teacher about the conduct of the school. "You must watch that Gene Marshall; and that little fellow from up the road, Linn Jepson and Fred Hutton too." Then having a happy inspiration, he urged: "Let 'em have the switch. Lick 'em hard." And so he went off smiling happily, gurgling to himself. Meanwhile the school, left by itself so long, - an unusual experience - went disorderly. Thus the teacher coming back suddenly into the school-room, heard the talking and beheld some infractions. Some pupils were not loyal, one or two, to boy codes of honor and three of us were called up to be whipped: myself, Gene Marshall and Bob Waterman. Then uprose the hand of Leila Williams, my cousin, and imperious leader on the girl's side of the school. The teacher stopped his strokes upon me, the first unlucky victim of his

wrath and listened to Leila. "Every boy in the school was just as bad as the three in front." This assertion caused deep consternation and the school fell to an awestruck silence. The teacher hesitated, then scolded us severely and we were sent to our seats.

— In that early day the pupils in the school were called scholars! And why not! We could read and write! So time goes, how short a period since the mass of the people, those in high place, even kings, and those in low place were unable to write or read. It was the common lot. A very few persons did the writing for the land of England and these were scholars. So that as schools grew, the little beginners were in compliment called scholars and the term came down through our British forbears, the colonists from the old country.

"The village all declared how much he knew,
'Twas certain he could write and cipher too"
— Oliver Goldsmith, Deserted Village.

In Dicken's Old Curiosity Shop, I think it is, Dickens in relating the wanderings of Little Nell and her grandfather, speaks of the school master and "his little scholars". — Nov. 20, 1934.

— My interest in the native plants began very early. In 1884 my sister Frances went on a visit to relatives in Oregon and brought back to me pressed specimens of some plants from Douglas Co.

— First sawmill, about 1841, near Bodega Bay. Forestry notes Univ. Cal. Extension, July, 1939.

— Redwood mill at Bodega, Captain Sutter. — Noted by Thos. Hartweg in Jour. Lond. Hort. Soc. 2:191 in 1846

— Today, Christmas Day, I went to the "Carols" at Leon J. Richardson's home, 111 Southampton ave., Berkeley. I fell into conversation with Guy Earl, who said: "In the Suisun Marshes, what I consider to have been Redwood has been brought up in well borings at a depth of 300 feet. Near Cygnus station, at my place there we ran into redwood at 300 feet. We had occasion to put down another well 100 feet distant. At 280 feet the borer ran into wood, — apparently a small limb. I told him to watch for wood at 300 feet. He struck the main trunk at 300 feet. It seemed as if it might be one tree lying horizontally which had been chanced into?" — Dec. 25, 1934.

— The child's wonderment of earth.

The Furrowed Land

- cf. Old-time Days in Vaca Valley, p. 123.

Selected Poems.

- "April", John Finley, Jr. (Atlantic Mo. p. 503. about 1929 (2 or 3 years earlier or later).
- Edward Rowland Sill, poems by.
- Love of Nature among the Romans. Sir A. Geike. London, 1912.

The Native Trees

- Cordwood from the Hardwood Trees of the Vaca Hills. cf. letter to J. M. Brazelton in Jepson Correspondence, Nov. 26, 1940.
- I have noticed little windfall, in the hills, of native trees. The woodland is a somewhat open always mixed stand. The hurricane-ruined planted forests of New England suffered terribly in the storm of 1938 because of following the german method — evenly ranked masses of trees all of one species in a given area and of the same age. It were better to have natural forests of mixed species and all ages. cf. Science, 10-7-38 in the Supplement, p. 10. (Separate: W. Shepard.]

Native Trees.

- When driving through the Santa Ynez River Valley in April, 1938 (cf. Field Book, 58:431) the Valley Oak trees were just bursting into leaf — not the dark green leafage of summer that so familiar through the years, but a foliage silvery-gray as the wind ran over it and a little suggestive of willow leaves under the trade winds. This phenomenon is one also of early spring in Vaca Valley. It is a brief, a fleeting phase. — but something about it stirs deeply seated or rarely touched feelings as if for eon or ancient times were momentarily revived for a few brief days. Is the spring the time when ancientry is for a moment blazoned forth? Is it just a few plants that betray the hall-mark of ancient times and these mostly annuals?

Civil War Days.

— cf. ballads and war verses of Francis Orray Ticknor, Dict. Am. Biog. 18:525.

— During Civil War days Vaca Valley was overwhelmingly Southern in its population make up. The Democratic party always won at the local election. Then the political complexion changed about 1892 and the Republicans were in a slight majority. At the national election, Nov. 5, 1940, Roosevelt polled 578, Willkie 505.

— Cont. from p. 148 at bottom: This great flow with clear skies was followed by another North Wind with cloudy skies, spitting intermittent rain and continued cold. This phase, too, is also a reminding remembrance of childhood.

— Foliage for the oxen. Cato, De Agricultura, p. 19.

Country School.

Drove to Vaca Valley about Apr. 7? '36 on a botanizing trip, incidentally called on the Harbisons. Mrs. Harbison remembers vaguely about the school at Jewett Bridge in early days. She thinks there was a school and a church, and that they, or one of them, stood on the corner opposite the old Oiler house. She spoke of one Anderson as being a famous man in the school in that early day. In discussing the neighborhood, Mrs. Harbison made one curious answer to a query of mine, and yet quite fitting for that early day. She said of a certain family: "Oh, they were too far over!" meaning that they lived beyond reach of neighborhood knowledge, that is a mile or so south of Grandpop Hawkin's place, which is within an air mile or mile and a half of the Harbison place! Another remark: we were speaking of the old-time "rug-bottom chairs" on the ranches. Mrs. H. said they were called "Campbellite chairs". She said of Grandpa Hawkins that he was a well-known and well-to-do citizen and always had a good supply of provisions and eatables.

Books

Books, especially story books were scarce. One day sister Frances got hold of a Family Fireside Journal that had in it a thrilling tale about the frontier settlers and Indians. All three of us sister Frances, Sister Mary and I got down on the ground by the side of the lane at the fig trees and Francis read while Mary and I listened breathless to the tale. The Indian attack on the settlement was led up to in the most dramatic manner when suddenly the frontier romance broke off suddenly. The next and last page had been torn out and was gone! The early winter twilight fell about us. We looked at each other aghast, huddled close together on the ground. It came to us suddenly that we should never know (Cont. p. 163)

The Old College

— I recovered the middle initial of one teacher from a copy of "Philosophy of Natural History" by John Ware. This was a gift from Professor Granville F. Foster. See fly leaf. Preceding him was Professor Carson, an Englishman or at least Canadian.

— Cont. from p. 162 —

whether the fleeing girl escaped with her life, and made the next settlement or was overtaken and scalped. The stars now twinkled aloft; the dusk fell tighter; down the lane on the little rise of ground where he had his village, the ground owl hooted weirdly. Almost affrighted we shuddered with a certain secret delight in the terrifying juncture and all at once fled to the shelter of the home roof, burst in at the door, and stood happily before the blazing logs in the great fire-place; here was safety, peace, protection. — c. 1936.

Topography - The Mountains.

Several times within the last week I climbed to the summit of Adam-and-Eve Ridge above St. Helena Sanitarium. One of the pleasures is to scan the distant ridges. From Adam-and-Eve there comes into view, barely seen over the heights of the nearer mountains, the long line of the Vaca Mountains and I try to identify the points, the undulations, so familiar to me from the Sacramento Valley side. It is an interesting game. And then away to the south I see a sharp and prominent but not high peak in a region very familiar, between Mt. Diablo and Grizzly Peak and I cannot identify it. Here lies the enigmas of the game. Seen from the west this "peak" may present the broadside of a range or ridge. Thus there is a quiet fascination in the study of a landscape from various points of view. Mt. Diablo is different from every side and yet from every side it has unexpected bulk and solidity.

And a few days ago I made holiday — on a day of great beauty, it was March 8 — about Vanden and Cannon on the Solano plains. Once getting my fill of browsing here and there on the plain — really very low rolling hills — I drove north on the Denverton-Elmira road, and turned west on the Dutch-John road to Little Oak. Before I crossed the railway tracks I saw a sight never remembered to have been seen before — the two summits of Twin Sisters Peak in the Napa Range, showing above the Araquipa Hills through the swale in the ridge line at the head of Osage Cañon. — March 26, 1936.

cf. p. 151 ante.

Visits Home after Long Absence

Nearly always, from Berkeley, I went home on an early morning train and got off at Vanden. Sometimes I did not send word and there was thus no one to meet me. And so I climb the easy slope of the long hill to The Mile Square Hill, down into the swale and up to the rise opposite Pigeon Point. After a quarter mile → comes a fuller view. There lies the expanse of the lower Vaca Valley and the eye follows northerly between the hills to the upper valley, → Putnams Peak clear and sharp above it. My land – the land of my boyhood – all of it: the sun on the wheat fields; the green of the orchard blocks; flocks of blackbirds hurrying to feeding grounds; – and here and there about the farms the people of simple ways

and direct speech. This is my land. My land because as a lad I knew it all on foot or by* aid of my pony's feet – every slope of hill, craggy point or curve of stream endeared by a thousand associations and glowing memories and young adventure.

"We were | two lads that thought there was no more behind,
But such a day tomorrow as today,
And to be a boy eternal." – Polixenes
in the Winter's Tale, Act. 2, Sc. 2, l. 63.

– The Home. – In the hot fall days a great thirst was developed, walking home from school. So we children rushed to the pump and pumped long and vigorously to get a cool drink of the far-underground waters. There was no running water.

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* the galloping pony's back

—cont. from p. 151—

boy I knew by heart the pattern of the Araquipa Hills! knew the location of almost every tree.

(I find that I have duplicated this note in regard to Twin Sisters. cf. p. 164. This shows the deep impression made on my mind by the incident)

The Dry Falls

This fall of 1939 has been a dry fall. There was a slight rainfall in Berkeley some weeks ago but aside from that one day the days have gone by and lengthened into months — mostly clear sunny days, or hazy days, or smoke-filled days — but quiet, warm and filled with sunshine. The last week or two seems particularly of Indian summer type — still hours, motionless trees as in a picture, warm colors creeping slowly into the landscape. And it has been so in Vaca Valley this fall where this season so far only two showers totaling 1/5 inch. October hot, one might say, in mid-day, November warm or hot in midday. In such long dry fall the wheat was sown on the summerfallow and harrowed in — the teams of heated horses coming in from the

(Cont. p. 173).

Horses

— A great deal of the interest and life of the ranch centered around the horses. Of course the riding horses were like good companions, but every horse on the ranch took a part in one's thoughts. I can well remember the wagon teams coming in, home from a journey; the work teams on the harrows from the summerfallowed lands tied to the fences at the end of the September or October days, before being watered at the windmill trough — little pools of water spotting the dust from their sweating bodies as they waited patiently; and groups of horses on a Sunday, browsing contentedly in the pastures or standing lazily in the sun. These animals were literally the horse power — and save the wind — the only traction power on the ranch.

Wild Life

— cf. Commonwealth Club minutes, Section on Forestry and Wild Life, Sept. 15, 1936 (L. A. Barrett). Tells a good deal of what I myself saw in early-day California.

— cf. "New Hope for the Biological Survey" of Anti-Steel-Trap League, filed in "Conservation File-Box".

The Balance of Nature.

Stir one orbit of that unseen web
Remotest are molest,
And all the seamless structure knows
Proportional unrest. —
Charlotte Kellogg.

Orchard Trees

A few days ago, Nov. 19, 1940, I drove to Vaca Valley and Peaceful Glen (cf. Men & Manners, vol. 13, p. 350). From every little vantage point the yellowing orchards reflected the autumnal light. Here and there blocks of apricot crowns glowed bronze in the afternoon sun — or where the light was right like molten gold.

— When we shall hear
The rain and wind beat dark December.
— Cymbeline, 3-3-36.

The Winds.

Of all roaring winds the North Wind was the most ominous. It was not one voice but many voices. Now sounding like a prolonged wail, now changing to staccato beats, now rising to heavy explosions, now to uneasy threats or half-muffled groans. But always there is the sense of power, of unbridled force on the rampage, — great gusts sweeping violently down the valley, anon slowing down for a moment — as if taking breath for a more intensive assault on all things large and small that stand in its way. Trees bend helplessly, houses, barnes and fences seem to crouch nakedly under the blast.

From the very start of the

wind, the air the countryside clears; every cloud, even the fleeciest cirrhus clouds of the upper skies are gone; the land becomes crystal clear; every point of the hills, every rocky knoll or rounded hill top becomes diamond clear. The atmosphere is brilliant; it fairly crackles with electricity. In winter the wind is bitter cold and soon dries up the country side even after a rain. Why should the north wind in winter dry all so thoroughly and completely? It comes off the snow fields of eastern Oregon and Washington. In summer it is a hot wind, bringing down the valley great clouds of dust. In May if it hit the wheat or barley in the milk it can reduce the crop by half or

two-thirds. The trade winds off the ocean more commonly, in summer, bring hazy or dusty skies, even when of high velocity. – 3-27-38.

– Cont. from p. 168.–

fields at sundown and tied to the fence posts in the corral to cool off before drinking – standing there wet with sweat, the water trickling heavily from their bodies and forming little pools on the dusty ground. – Nov. 23,'39

– Cont. from p. 134. New York City.

He was, perhaps the most famous physician of his day and a good botanist. See his biog. in Dict. Am. Biog. 20:434. An early day portrait of him, a fine steel engraving came into my hands early and started my interest in the genus Hosackia. Both my chum and myself knew well the names (Cont. p. 174)

— Friday afternoon exhibitions.

"Morgan, — Morgan the Raider,
And Morgan's terrible men

* *

They are riding down the glen".

— "The Boy stood on the burning desk".
The boy Casabianca was the son of the captain of the French flagship Orient at the Battle of the Nile when the French fleet was totally defeated by the British fleet under Nelson. The French flagship's captain was killed in action, the flagship took fire and blew up, but the lad Giacomo Casabianca, not knowing of his father's death, refused to leave with the crew and so perished. cf. Time, Feb. 17, 1941, p. 30.

Cont from bottom p. 173. of our Hosackia species, Hosackia subpinnata and Hosackia brachycarpa (Lotus humistratus) and Hosackia parviflora Bth. (Lotus micranthus Bth.). At length I discovered that was an early day Professor of Botany in Columbia College, wrote a memoir of the famous physician Caspar Wistar, for whom Thomas Nuttall, a botanical explorer in California in 1836, named the genus Wistaria, a beautiful climbing vine of gardens, much used in California.

— J. W. Stevens was the first teacher who seemed up-to-date and clever in relation to the great world beyond our mountains. At school assembly he read or recited literary tid-bits. One was "Punch, Brothers, Punch with Care, Punch in the presence of the Passengaire". Apparently this was by Mark Twain since I find an item of the poem in a book dealers catalog citing as originally occurring in Atlantic Monthly, vol. 37, no. 220 (Feb., 1876) under the title "A Literary Nightmare".

— After Stevens was Carson, a Canadian. After Carson the principal was Foster. My class mates, Frank and Ralph Platt and Effie Eversole, as they were finishing the school course, were encouraged by Foster to "graduate" in May. They wished me to "graduate" with them. I refused,

Cont. p. 178.

Orchard Trees.

— Quince. Has been grown since ancient times. Used with us for making jelly. Added a variety to the home orchard tho' it had only one use. There is a U.S.D.A. Leaflet No. 158 on "Quince Growing" (1938) but it contains nothing much.

Animals, Wild and Domestic

We spoke of a herd of cattle, a drove of hogs, a band of horses, a flock of geese or of blackbirds, a swarm of bees, a pack of wolves. A considerable list of group terms for animals is found in Cal. Ranger, Sept. 6, 1940 (vol. 11, no. 41).

Cont. from p. 144. Oil Bulletin, Feb, 1941. See "Orchard Trees" file.

— Little Oak, scarcity of timber at in early days. cf. Men and Manners, 14:107.

The Old College Bell.

In the days of the California Baptist College the Garnetts of Dixon sent sons and daughters to the college. I remember once taking my sister Frankie in to the village late one afternoon on account of some occasion at the college in the evening. As we neared the village — we were riding — a rider came to meet me. It was Neat Garnett. He had been sent by Mrs. Gregory, wife of the President of the College, with a message, to Little Oak, fearing my sister might not come on account of the stormy winter weather. This incident was probably about December, 1878.

— cf. my letter to H.S. Cory, Feb. 16, 1942; and a letter from her in Vaca Valley file II.

The Old College Bell

- Cont. from p. 175. since I wished to go to college, and I feared my father would be less receptive if I had "graduated", which was a term to denote the completion of school days. Frank Platt used his best arts of persuasion - I scarcely know why unless he was encouraged by Foster who wanted to make a showing before the public of our little village - and finally offered to give up to me the valedictory which had been assigned him. But I stood fast.-

Sept. 10, '38.

This must have been in the year 1884 in May, I think, since I continued at the school another year after the Platt boys quit, that is until May 1885, entering the University in Sept., 1885. My only error above is this: I think Carson was the principal when Frank and Ralph Platt graduated.

W. J. Stevens, Principal, Aug. '80 to May, 1882

Carson, Principal, Aug. 1882 to May, 1883.

Foster, Principal, Aug. 1883 to May, 1885.

That is Foster was Principal two years - My reason for thinking this: At the time of the "Big Fight", - Geo. Morehouse and Wirt Stice, - the Platts were in school and it is my remembrance that it was Foster who called me into his office about the fight; in the following year the Platts were not in school - I was the "big boy" in the school and Millie Thurber one of the "big girls". It is possible I may run on to some old records which will check this matter. These early days one likes to review - a liking reinforced by the judgment of Samuel Johnson.

— Sept. 10, '38.

I now recall this: When Carson came in Aug. 1882, few of the boys that had been at school with Stevens the previous year, returned. That lot of boys seemed to me likeable and interesting. The school was "thin" under Carson; I remember Will Foster and few more. It seemed that Will got tired of school and left in midterm — such is my memory — but that could hardly be, since I well remember him in the geometry class with me under Raleigh Barcan. Perhaps he left at Christmas, or maybe he stayed the year and left at beginning of next year; but I think not. It was Carson we were disgusted with. Foster was not much of a teacher, but he was educated and kindly. — Sept. 10, 1938.

— Redwood. Early day houses and barns and sheds were mainly built of redwood.

Old-time Songs.

— Rock-a-bye Baby. Author: Mrs. Effie I. Canning Carlton, died Jan. 7, 1940 in Boston, about 84. Composed when she was about 15, in 1870 say. — S. F. Examiner, Jan. 8, 1940.

— Father, dear father, come home with me now,
The clock in the steeple strikes ten.

Old-time School Songs.

Reuben, Reuben, I've been thinking,
What a fine world this would be,
If the men were all transported,
Far beyond the northern sea.

Poplars. — Four poplar trees stood on the east side of the house at Little Oak — three in a row and the fourth so placed as to make with its companion two tall columns which furnished supports for the ropes of a swing where play of this sort was gratified. Poplars, tall, slender, compact, give to a flat country a certain relief, a certain air of elegance. One notes their satisfying in the landscapes painted by Corot and many another artist.

- Cont. from bottom p. 124 -

personage, sufficiently singular and unusual to warrant staring – but the customed round had rendered him dry and futile. Only once in ages did any one new come to church – as if so cast into too common a mold.

Staring of sorts is sanctioned by history – but perhaps mainly by the proletariat. In the tragedy of Julius Caesar

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The Little Vales and Glens

– See account of my trip to Peaceful Glen, Nov. 19, 1940, in "Men and Manners" vol. 13, p. 350.

Orchard Trees

When harvesting a fruit crop in the summer we put in 4 tall posts, made a frame at their tops and piled leafy boughs on this, making a sort of pleasant arbor which was called a ramada.

Native Anglo-Saxon Stock and its displacement.

– At Versailles 403 aliens registered.
Reporter, 11-15-40.

– Edwin Markham, at School, story of. cf. S. D. Woods in California Writers Club, Quarterly Bulletin, vol. 2, no. 3. Oct., 1914.

Orchard Trees

A row of mulberry stood in front of the old home at Little Oak, just to the right of the front gate path. The berries ripened in June. – Because of being fruit we lads ate them but they were not a prime favorite. The linnets liked them better than we did. Compare the legend of the Mulberry tree as given in Brewer. Dict. of Phrase and Fable, p. 869. cf. the scientific names, Morus rubra, Morus nigra, Morus alba. Also M. alba var. multicaulis, Chinese Mulberry (on which silkworms feed). cf. Morus, greek, fool; cf. Brewer, p. 869.

Boyhood Scenes, a few out of many thousands impressed upon the mind of a lad forever, the rest gone within a day; these few entrenched in the memory—altho' their significance at the time was not apprehended or understood:—

– 1. One winter my family lived in the village, Vacaville. Always exploring I wandered into the hills northward from Callen st. where we lived. It was the spring time; water filled the rain pools; tadpoles flourished in them. As I came back from my walk I passed the poor home of a widow woman. Her son, a lad of my own age, was in the little field near his mother's house, bending over the water of a little pool and poking idly with a stick at the tadpoles and the new-swarming water life. My instincts were democratic and I stopped to talk with him. Not raising his head toward me, he only mumbled in an unfriendly way and then turned with a glowering look towards a man

that was just then entering his mother's gate. Many men entered that gate. The mother, perhaps destitute, was a prostitute. At the time I knew nothing of that, of course, but recalling now what passed on there at that time the fact is certain. And never shall I forget the crouching lad, refusing fellowship with me, and turning sullen eyes towards the man of lust approaching his mother's door.

– 2. Getting an education. It was thought a fine thing to go to school; to learn just to read and write. It was valued and striven for; labored for; great sacrifices made to attain. Nowadays a school education is forced on everyone and few value it. Though so many have the power to write, or I would better say, have been taught to write, they will not use the training they have been given. They will not write a letter; they will not write a memorandum or a note. Thirty years ago, I well remember, some man on the campus tried to see me for a whole month. He had to make answer, — simple assent or dissent — to a query put to him. I was away part of the time with students in the field and only after a month did he find me. He came in to my laboratory, said "Yes" and turned and went out. That one word was all there was to say. I shall never forget it.

Even scholarly men, often, will not write. Dr. J. A. B. Fry is a scholarly man. He saw a letter in my file relating to early days in Vaca Valley, and wished

extremely to have a copy. I pondered the matter for several weeks and then directed my secretary to make a copy, which was sent him. Thereupon Dr. Fry tried in every way for a long time to see me. He came to my laboratory; he came to my house; he tried the telephone. I was away in Southern California and it was no use. Finally, I did the unusual thing — I went to University Meeting one day in the Cowell Gymnasium — and Dr. Fry saw me and at once came to where I was sitting to speak of his pleasure in having the letter. No less than fifty anecdotes could be stirred out of memory — concerning the refusal or dislike of writing. But all this was very different when I was a child.

I looked with interest and maybe a certain wonder on the Notary and his writing, upon my scholarly sister Frances writing always for practice and diversion and later for publication.

It is curious: my mind operates in terms of thousands of years or in geological time-scales – on account of my profession. It is only a short time since men had no alphabet, no written speech. To me, even as a child, it was a very wonderful thing that men could make marks on paper and so convey, so send their talk to some person far away. But few persons nowadays feel that way about it.

In very early California, commonplace things were difficult to come by. Paper, pen and ink might be hard to get. All this reacted on the mind of a child born a little less than twenty years after the discovery of gold. One values most things strived for hardest. It is not for nothing that John L. Lewis, after a great labor battle, goes home and reads Shakespeare. – Dec. 6, 1940.

"Back East"

- Our people spoke of "going back to the States" Dame Shirley in the Shirley Letters speaks of Cal. as if not part of the U.S., p. 244. Like so many she was fascinated by the new land: "how I expect to be very happy here". "This strange odd life fascinates me", p. 101. "Our California" is one of her phrases.

— Botanizing in the hills, the cañons of the mountains, along the valley streams is a very wonderful thing. There is the call of the open, the delights of the native plants, the constant discovery of flowers not seen before; the enticing game of guessing their identities, to what family they belong. All this is highly exciting because it is all our own game. There is no one to help us because no one in our little valley { cares for. knows aught of the native flora. So each new plant opens a new chapter, each former acquaintance tells us something fresh in the lore of plant life. And with all this, so vivid but natural, so engaging but familiar, there is at times, with certain plants, a hint, a shadowy

trace of something strange or alien, as of travelers from distant ages, as of youthful bright imagery from far-away and long-ago. The California Buckeye is one; its naked summer branches, the early bursting of its leaves in February the late blooming of its wondrous crown of flowers after the dry season begins make it a tree apart. It does not belong with the rest of our broad-crowned trees. The tiny herb, Blennosperma, blooming in a wet spot on the naked earth on the sunny side of the Mile-Square Hill almost before the winter pass. The California Buttercup filling in March every moist or northeast glade with its multipetaled corollas. And here in Weldon Cañon stirs bright imagery: the Bush Monkey-flower, the Blue Pentstemon, the Red Ribbons (Clarkia concinna) on tiny talus of loose fine soil — all these and many more come down from a distant time and carry in their habits and in structure hints of far-away ages, when the creative processes on the earth worked in blinding brilliance. Yet this day the sun shines bright; faint murmurs of life sound up the slopes and through the chaparral; and the lad, eagerly aglow with the pulse of life all about, hears, albeit unconsciously,

"The horns of elf-land faintly blowing;" tell-tale sounds from earth eras long long passed, but in time to be understood by knowing the flowering plants, the dry-land ferns, the see-sawing insects, because these bring messages to him from a long-ago when the world was young, though as yet he senses all this only dimly. Nevertheless, on the lad's mind is

deeply-etched impressions of Nature's ways and Nature's methods:

"For he on honey-dew hath fed
And drunk the milk of Paradise."

Ah yes of paradise — for the slopes and uplands in the hills, the warm scent of the chaparral form a world utterly different from that of everyday, far away from that we knew everyday — so far away from men and the doings of men and all the artifacts of men.

Smoke and Haze

"The sun was tempered by a thin blue haze that softened and rounded all outlines and lent distance to the view." — Llewellyn Holland, in Atlantic Mo. 168:92.

Pacific Methodist College

From Hester A. Harbison I get certain facts, on my trip to Vaca Valley about May 12, 1941, about the old college.

Class of 1864

Matthew Fountain Johnson (lawyer, Sacramento).
Laura Lucky, daughter of President Lucky
Melissa Allison
Josephine Allison
Samuel Creighton
Campbell Poulson Berry
Zebulon Butler Donaldson
—— Finlay
Hattie Williams (sister of Frank Williams). She married Frank Vail.
Crittenden Wilson, son of Mason Wilson.

And two more Mrs. Harbison does not remember.

— Continued p. 197.

The Native Trees

And here were forests ancient as the hills,
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery. —
Kubla Khan.

— Edwin Markham has a poem on the Suisun Hills and the "sycamores" in its stanzas. I am confident there are no sycamore in western Solano County south of Putah Creek. Are there any along Putah Creek? Along the Sacramento River east, yes. Putah Creek, I cannot recall.

— In the very earliest day as we drove about the countryside there is fixed in my memory fence lines on the Arculus Hawkins place, the posts of oak which must have been split from the trunks of the Valley Oak.

Cultivated Trees.

As to the old-time trees planted about the house and in the village, compare my notes on old-time Hornitos in F. B. 41:130

— Common Locust, Robinia pseudoacacia L. Native of region from Penn. to n. Georgia. Seeds sent to John Robin, herbalist to Henry IV of France, in 1601. Michaux, N. Am. Sylva 2:92, says it was one of the first N. Am. trees introduced into Europe. Now well known in France, England and Germany. Long-lived tree. — P. E. F. Perrédès, in Pharmaceutical Journal, Aug. 3, 1901. Poisonous principle of bark, in Pharm. Rundsch. 8:29. c. 1890.

— Family excursions. We took great delight in trips through Napa Valley, a valley so different from our own valley and so much more abundantly wooded as to give a sense of rich wildness. For note on beauty of the trees see Men and Manners, vol. 14, p. 158.

Pacific Methodist College

Cont. from p. 194.

Class of 1874. (Cal. Baptist College?)

Hester Allison

Charles Smith of the Pacific Methodist College was Professor of Mathematics. He married Fannie Davis, daughter of Bill Davis

Donors of Endowment.

Mason Wilson; J.W. Dobbins; Josiah Allison; Bill Davis.

There was a large following of Southern Methodists in the Sacramento Valley. The elders of the church conferred and decided there ought to be a college — there were so few places of higher education.

At Vacaville from a very early time in the fifties, there had been a school started by   Anderson. He was a very able man, a man of rare capacities. He sought to bring out the best there was in every pupil. He made it an inspirational school. The fame of it almost overshadows the college which succeeded it. The college was put at Vacaville — because this school seemed a vigorous nucleus for a young college.

In the Vacaville Reporter is an article about Mar. 1941, by   who says her father built cabins for the college students on the hill above the college (which was then on the south bank). Mrs. Harbison says this group of cabins was called Science Hill.

Native Trees.

We had few trees. The grandest to my mind was the Valley Oak. The adjective to use with it was "lordly". The Fremont Cottonwood was a fine tall tree, always in some color to some degree — even in winter — and therefore the adjective for it was "cheerful". The Big-leaf Maple is, when well-grown, a "princely" tree. The tall White Alders, in Miller Cañon are "stately" trees. The Interior Live Oak is a noble tree. The Blue Oak of the dry hills is a kindly tree. The California Black Oak is an aristocratic tree. The Digger Pine is a quaint tree. These are the main trees save the willows — and thus we have in our land the lordly Valley Oak, the cheerful Fremont Cottonwood, the princely Big-leaf maple, the stately White Alder,

the noble Live Oak, the kindly Blue Oak, the proud Black Oak, and the quaint Digger Pine. These then are our most conspicuous trees of valley and cañon in a land that boasts not much woodland. (See vol. 2, p. 59.)
— Trees of the Vallejo Hills. Men and Manners, 14:145

Cont. from p. 60. out the earth into fine dust blown away by the wind under the years. Men also came into the village to loaf and drink at the saloons, leaving their patient horses without food or water tied to the hitching racks until far into the night — their owners gambling and drinking.

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